The Greatest Truth

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THE GREATEST TRUTH

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THE GREATEST TRUTH

AND OTHER DISCOURSES AND INTERPRETATIONS

BY

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PROGRESSIVE LITERATURE CO

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FOREWORD

In the City of God, on a commanding hill whence one may look forth over all the kingdoms of the universe, there stands the church universal. Sometimes, as I have wandered down its majestic aisles, it seemed to exist for me alone. Therefore, I sought a secluded chapel and worshipped in silence there. Again, I felt myself to be one of myriads who had gathered from all quarters of the universe. Anon, the vast throngs worshipped in music only—the hearts and voices of vast choirs of men and women sang glad hymns to their Maker. At other times, people from various nations gathered with their kinsmen to worship in their mother tongue. The wonder of it all was the number and variety of those worshipping

groups, assembled there in unity of spirit. I wandered from group to group and from chapel to chapel. As I walked, the walls and columns seemed to rise and grow before me, so that I found no end; and interior after interior opened in the soft distance. If I stepped out into the joyous light of day, I still seemed to be within the walls. Moreover, the whole scene varied from time to time, as I reascended the heights to the great Church.

At length I learned that there were no outer walls about that Church, that its scenes varied as my inner state altered. This discovery led to another, that wherever in all the worlds of God a soul sends its thoughts aloft to the Father it enters that Church. The various groups I had wandered among were worshipping nations, assembled in their fatherlands. But, more than this, scattered souls, vast distances apart, worshipped the unity there—so I

learned. Then I knew that any one could there find congenial spirits, however their outward circumstances and beliefs might differ. To my joy I also understood at last how I, too, could minister and be ministered unto. The visible church which I had sought I need not longer seek. For in that vast Church of God I found a chapel where a group of fellow-men gladly gathered to listen, when I would speak. Hence the discourses which follow, some of which I have also given in visible churches, here on earth.

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THE GREATEST TRUTH

CHAPTER I

GLAD TIDINGS

Oh ! my fellow men, my sisters, and my brothers, a great truth has been made known unto the world, a truth which concerns you one and all. It is a message of joy, a gospel of peace and love. It is a word spoken unto the heart, it brings power and guidance to the soul. Above all it is a life-giving message, freighted with that life eternal which sets humanity free. Let us meditate for a time upon that message that we may gain a new impetus for daily living.

You who are burdened with troubles which seem too great to bear. You who are toiling, toiling the livelong day, pursuing a dreary round which apparently shuts out all hope.

To the labourer in the city streets, the household drudge on the lonely farm. To the oppressed and the oppressor, the rich and the poor, society's slave and the social aspirant. To you who have tasted the world's boasted pleasures and found no joy therein. To the hounded sinner and the condemned who know no way of escape, who would do good but have not learned the way. To the sorrowful and the afflicted, to the soul that is famished for spiritual food, the truth-seeker and the sceptic. To one and all, of whatever creed or clime, of whatever race or condition, to those who pray for light, and those who love mercy, peace, and justice. There is one panacea for all ills, one truth which will set you free. Listen, then, while I speak to one and to all; not as one having authority, but as one who has toiled a little way up the steep slope of the mountain of life and beheld a glorious vista whose import he would fain share.

It is the vision of the beauty and wisdom, the grandeur and power of God. Oh! my people, know the great truth: God lives.

God is here. This is no mere belief, no conclusion established by argument. God is not a far-off substance, not a monarch seated upon a throne. Nor is He a wonder-worker, one whose ways are not to be depended upon. He abides near and within the great universe which so marvellously reveals Him. He is a being of boundless wisdom and love, of justice, peace, and mercy. He knows your ways, knows the hearts and minds, apprehends the needs of all. He knows your problems, your toilsome and your doubting hours, your heart-aches and your heart-longings. He knows the way out of your darkness and misery. Listen to Him for He is nigh. Listen to Him for He will guide you. He is light and in Him is no darkness. He is love and in Him is no hatred. He is peace and in Him is no discord.

If you would know the truth, if you would possess the great joy and find the freedom which is true liberty, consider this great fact, and see all else in the light of this. Here is the way which knows no obstacle, here is the resource which never faileth.

Say not that the reality is shut out from your sight. Say not that the truth is not for you, or that God is partial. The power that will change all for you is here to-day. This day shall you know that there is one true God, who possesseth all things, who guideth all things, who will carry all things and all peoples forward to peace and joy and freedom.

Oh, my people, I declare the great truth yet again: *God lives.* In this great and beautiful universe of ours His life ever pulsates. There is no power beyond His. There is no opposition, no lesser or wholly independent life. All that exists is of and from and for God. All that is partakes of His life, reveals His ineffable glory. He called it into being. He has purpose in it all. It is life of His life, substance of His substance, heart of His heart. He has loved it into being. He is with all beings in love, ever sustaining, guiding, uplifting; there is nought besides His kingdom.

When Jesus the Christ walked among men

many centuries ago, this was the sublime message He delivered unto the world: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' In this fact all else that He came to declare was included. This was the purport of His summons wherever He called men to repentance. This was the foundation of His promises alike to His hearers and to the unborn generations who were to read His words. And this message meant that the Father is 'at hand,' not afar, as the Hebrews had been believing of their God, Jehovah. It was this declaration, 'at hand,' which gave His message such power. The disciples caught the word and transmitted it. Again and again since that wondrous time the same message has gone forth. It is the word of glad tidings by which those who hunger and thirst for the Spirit are everywhere greeted. The Christ stands for just this fact of facts. To those who apprehend the significance of Christ's coming, this is the central revelation. It is they who truly know that the kingdom is literally, truly, fully, all-inclusively 'at hand.' They who hear the

news and understand, shall enter into that kingdom, there to be fed, there to find peace.

We are apt to think of the voice of Jesus as having spoken long ago. We put the Christ far from us, as men had put the heavenly kingdom when Jesus came to call them back to consciousness of it. Hence the need of sending forth again, and ever persistently, that thrilling message which throughout the ages has so often stirred men's hearts anew. Whatever we think, whatever we do, whether we doubt or wander from the fold, to those who have been stirred by the news, as well as to those who have never heard it, the message is ever the same: the kingdom is wherever you or any one else lives loyally, where you and where all men faithfully toil. Only by hearing the news afresh, and by bearing it to many others, by constant return to the Father's house and as constant going forth into His vineyard, shall we ever know at last the deep significance of that matchless utterance of Jesus.

Hear, then, that utterance as it once more

sounds to men's ears. The Christ is here! The Christ is here! The same beautiful presence is among us, the same gentle spirit, compassionate heart and helping hand. That spirit is not now embodied in one human form as of old. Jesus no longer walks among men in the flesh. The fleshly life was for a season only—yet what a marvellous period of light, wherein the true 'light of the world' was actually seen. But the fleshly manifestation faded only that the greater glory might be revealed. From that thrilling voice countless echoes were heard. By that compassionate heart myriads of lives were quickened. These echoes gave back the message, and these lives declare the love. The Christ-power is drawing all men unto itself, the true Comforter has come. There need be no other isolated manifestations in the flesh. It is the universal revelation that follows its particular manifestation. From the great centre of life and power, wisdom and love have gone forth to all. Thus the many declare what once the isolated soul beheld.

Unless we hear not only the individual fleshly message, but its universal confirmation, we do not understand the complete revelation. It is not enough to hear again the voice of Jesus from afar, as if to hear were to retain, as if to believe were to do. The test is to go and do likewise, both to hear and declare. The particular revelation may be historical and distant, the universal can only be present and living. He who can look back and behold the Christ, then turn to humanity and discover the Christ in process, truly knows that the great truth is universal.

Hence each soul, hearing the voice that sounds across the centuries, must turn to the great universe about him and consider it as Jesus bade all men regard it. The kingdom of God is at hand in the rock, in the seed, in the plant, the animal and man, in the great world-order and in the social cosmos. To make any exception is to fail to see what Jesus came to declare. It is the universe in all its fulness that is the kingdom of God. The revelation of Jesus concerning the king-

dom which is 'within' is doubtless the first fact. The soul must be set right before it can discern the true world. But the discovery of the universe at large as surely follows. Hence the vital truth without which the inner Christ of old means little, namely, the truth that God lives, that His total kingdom abides, is as fully here as it was nineteen centuries ago. It is only by putting oneself into a certain attitude towards life that one is able to verify the particular revelation. The revelation once verified, one turns rather to the living God of to-day than to the mere account of His more meagre revelation of old.

The Christ bespeaks the ideal attitude, the true approach to the Father, in all times and places. To those who thus approach, the Father speaketh freely; and what shall be uttered none knoweth till the inspired voice shall utter it. This immediate, personal revelation is the one we so often miss, because we place undue stress upon the historical utterance. Overestimating the mere words

spoken of old, we underestimate the power of God to-day, we dare not believe He can speak to us. To believe in ourselves seems to be disloyal to Jesus. Yet only by such belief may we apprehend the great principle for which His life stood.

To apprehend the Christ-spirit and carry it into daily life means much more than we are here saying. But let us for the time being simply voice the glad tidings of discovery. No discovery can equal in scope and power the one which stirs the soul when, having searched near and far, one turns from letter to spirit, from the visible and external to the invisible and interior, and exclaims in reverent surprise, Behold, God is here! One may picture the listening soul, rapt in the attitude of discovery and uttering words like these:

Oh, Spirit of spirits, Soul of souls, Life of lives, the Beauty of all that makes beautiful, the Love of all who love, the Wisdom of all who are wise, I feel Thy glorious presence, I know that Thou art nigh. I have long sought

Thee, and now Thou hast revealed Thyself. Oh, fill my soul with Thy presence that I may help men everywhere to know Thee, to know that there is nought without Thee! Oh, the blessedness of life with Thee! Would that men who are far from knowledge of Thee could know the joy and peace which now have come. Oh, Spirit of spirits eternal; oh, Love of love that dies not; oh, Beauty that never fades; make known Thy presence that all may share the glorious knowledge that beyond all that comes and goes, beyond all that is visible, Thou dost ever exist.

Then we may behold the same enraptured soul turning from the sacred vision to declare it wherever there are willing ears: Of the blessed Spirit I sing to you, my people, the Spirit mighty and eternal. Sometimes I speak as from myself. Again, I turn and address the tender Father of all that I am and shall be. Then perchance the Spirit speaks better than I could speak and ye hear Him the Ineffable, the Father ever-present and sustaining. From the eternal solitudes, as well as

from the life of busy man, the same message comes. It comes in long waves of soothing melody. It comes in stirring accents, filled with the fire of life. It whispers in gentle murmurings, low and sweet. It waves and sways and advances. It rests and restores the soul.

Oh, my people, hear ye that voice! Be still in the heaven of silences and listen for its rhythmic pulse-beat. Give ear to the monotones of the forest and hear it there. Feel with the love of the mother and behold the Father's tender care. Be strong with the strength of the father, and feel the Mother's gentle spirit. Look with the eyes of the poet at the beauty of yonder hill. Sing with the musician, and hear the undying melodies.

There is a harmony born of the ages, a joy that has been sung since creation's natal day. List to its sweet cadences, open wide the doors of the soul.

Do you feel the mighty Power? Then abide by that, live in and for that. Trust all to God, leave the future to Him. Be a man

of God to-day. Be a soul. Be true to the best you know, and cling to what love and peace you have. Carry that love to your fellows. Be at peace with the world.

CHAPTER II

THE GREATEST TRUTH

WHAT is the truth which above all other truths shall make men free? Is it the fact that Jesus died on the cross? Is it a particular fact in the life of any individual? Evidently, if it is to free all men, it is a universal principle which has always been true, unlimited by any historical event. At the same time an historical life may bear witness above all previous evidences that it is true.

This greatest of truths is inseparably connected with the entire gospel of Jesus, hence with His teaching in regard to the inner life, the laws of spiritual growth and service, the works He wrought, and the immortality which He brought to light. For if we ask the old question, What is truth? the answer which

Jesus gives is found to include a wealth of facts and laws implying a central principle which He uttered first and last: 'God is in His universal kingdom, the Father is "at hand"; He is the life of all, and none has power, none is good apart from Him.' This is without doubt the great truth which Jesus came to reveal. It is the peculiar manner whereby Jesus made this truth known that gives His life its unprecedented significance.

No truth is more frequently enunciated by religious teachers. Yet, just because of its familiarity, its fullest significance is generally overlooked. Were it really understood, we should see the end of all doubt, fear, anxiety, despair, warfare, inequality, injustice, and oppression; and, in due course, the end of all suffering. There is every reason, then, why we should work in this the richest of all mines. At any moment we are likely to discover treasures which are new to us all.

Let us then once more enter the holy of holies with reverential feet, with hearts of humility, and listening, expectant souls.

Since it is true that God is all in all, it is from the Father that we may expect the new revelation of truth which is to illumine our pathway. Fortunate shall we be if we can so far put self aside to feel His radiant presence, receive from His limitless wisdom, and partake of His infinite love. We know that all truth is for us, all peace, love, and joy. It rests with us to be faithful, to fulfil the law; then all that we seek shall be given, all that we need shall be bountifully supplied. It is the Father Himself who will teach us, His spirit within the soul which shall lead us into all truth. We must, therefore, begin as we would end, by seeking the conditions wherein all that we have need of has already been provided.

Peace be with us, therefore, that peace which words dimly suggest, but which every heart may feel. May the simplicity and receptivity of true humility characterise every moment of our sweet brotherly communion, as we reverentially seek more wisdom, more light, greater appreciation of this truth of truths.

First let us remember that it is the Spirit that 'giveth life'; the letter by itself is cold and dead. There is more truth to be told than our lips can utter, more than words can even suggest. We must give ear to the over-word, poetically appreciate what we cannot prosaically comprehend. For it is the real *life* we seek, the food that feeds the soul, not merely the knowledge of the law which satisfies the mind.

There is a word spoken with power which becomes flesh, the creative embodiment of God's omnipresence. It is spoken first to the heart, then it is more slowly apprehended by the mind. Later it becomes bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Happy are we if we so understand the law of its coming that we may have patience while the intellectual and fleshly gifts are being added to this inmost possession of the kingdom of the soul.

Let us begin our search at the foundation, as if all our ideas were new. In deepest truth the ideas are new, for they come with the re-creating spirit of a new day, they are

true for us because true to-day. God must be all in all for us to-day if He is all in all at any time. It is the revelation of the present moment which is the most dear. It is the evidence of His life, even now active within us, that is the final proof that God really lives. All other proofs are secondary. You must first possess God to know Him, and if you possess Him you need not prove that He exists. It is not so much that man goes in search of God to demonstrate that He really lives, as that God who possesses man, reveals Himself as vitally present.

God is His own witness. God meets God in the soul of man, and knows that He is the Father. God looks out through the windows of the soul and beholds His wondrous works, and sees that they are good. The eyes of every human soul are organs of vision for God; through each life He beholds the world in a different yet in ever the same light. It is just this inexhaustible variety of individual experiences which enables the Father fully to declare and know Himself. The Father is

made perfect as the all in all through the infinite diversity of His creatures. Through each He achieves a different end, yet through all the same end. Life is truly a unit, an order, a system, because there is one supreme Power, one Wisdom, one Love manifested through all. God would be incomplete without the creature, without a world of activity, growth, variety, and achievement. Yet the world is only great through Him; the creature is nothing without the Father.

This is the miracle of miracles, that God is all in all; that all is for His glory, and there is no power beyond His. Yet the creature lives too, and has a will, passes through an experience and wins a triumph as freely and fully its own as if no other being existed. The creature is of and from God, and it is unqualifiedly true that man is nought without the Creator. But man is also himself in such wise that, while in reality acted upon and sustained by the Father, he seems to act independently as if for himself. There are, as it were, three types of consciousness, the Father

working and beholding through the creature as part of Himself ; the creature rising to the point of communion with the Creator, and realising that he is nought without the Father; and the creature viewing himself as a separate being. It is the intermediate stage which most concerns us, where God and man meet, where the Father knows the son, and the son knows the Father. The Father is there beholding the son's life, and looking through his eyes out upon the world. The son is conscious that the Father is present; he looks on in wonder, love, and praise, thankful beyond all power of words to declare that he is aware of the divine presence, that he is privileged to participate and to know his sublime origin.

It is easy to confuse these types of consciousness and to speak as if one's awareness of the divine presence were the great totality of God. Yet comparison of vision with vision, and the description given by one seer with the account made by another, shows that we know in part, just as we live in part, but when that

which is perfect is come it is no longer the mere human seer—it is the great God beholding, of whose transcendent presence not one revelation alone is the expression, but all spiritual truth is needed. God is the great Self, Being, Reality, as revealed in all, as manifested through nature, and as known unto Himself. What you and I hear from above is but a strain among strains, a theme amidst themes, while the complete symphony is heard through the entirety of eternity by the Father.

Hence we see the inadequacy of all attempts to prove the existence of God by arguments from design in nature, and the like. For the largest collection of evidences which any human being can make is but a fragment; at best, it is but one point of view. Even then the essential is not the argument, but the quickening spirit which inspired it. The fundamental fact is the presence, that sustaining life of which the soul was conscious while aware that it was not itself alone but also the Father. If we have had the quickening experience we see

value in the evidence; otherwise it is merely a collection of empty words. There is a light which lighteth every man coming into the world. If one is aware of the light, one can follow any line of inquiry, and behold the word becoming flesh.

An argument from the flesh leads but a little beyond the flesh. An argument in psychological terms may still be decidedly human. As there is more in man than the flesh and the feelings, thoughts and desires, with which we so often identify ourselves, we must start with the soul which beholds and uses these. The soul is already a son of God, and the soul must teach concerning the Father of the soul.

What is the confession of the soul in its moments of keenest insight? What is the cardinal fact of our distinctively human life? The prophets of this great truth which we are considering assure us that it is the sense of self in contrast with the more than self, the painfully finite in the presence of the joyfully infinite aspects of our selfhood. Let us dwell

for a moment on this contrast, the sense of man's smallness in the presence of the glory and grandeur of God.

There are many stages in the evolution of self-consciousness. First, we awaken to the fact that there is a self within us, apart from the self of father, mother, friend. There is a naïve awareness that an 'I' exists. But the tendency is to identify this self with the body, or with a particular part of the body, such as the head. The discovery of desires, of a will, and the power of action, and of sufferings arising from actions, leads to a larger consciousness of self as mental and moral. An enormously large realm opens with man's intellectual quickening. Desires multiply and vast plans are developed for the enlargement of self and its powers. The sense of self enlarges without limit till man becomes conscious that he is environed by a law-girt order, a natural and spiritual universe which persistently says to him, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'

It is thus the sense of limitation which

brings the great truth home to man, the discovery that even his most private consciousness is beset by obstacles and temptations which he cannot surmount by himself alone. Meanwhile there has been growing within him a moral sentiment, a religious consciousness, which more and more persistently makes him aware of a better amidst a worse, a something that is above and greater. Thus the contrast between man's 'nothing perfect' and God's 'all complete' is borne in upon him with tremendous force. Here, on the one hand, is a part which wants to be something in and for itself. It is wilful, and insists on being wilful. It constantly rebels because it finds itself in a universe where selfishness is thwarted. Side by side with it is a sentiment which points far beyond. It indicates the way out of temptation. It desires nothing for itself, all is for humanity and the Father. All is for love. It says unto the personal self, 'All that you would be is vain, if sought for self alone. Thou canst be nothing of thyself. Truth and love

are not won by separateness. It is the sense of separateness which alienates man from all that he most truly longs for. Thou art nothing apart from God, literally nothing, nothing.'

This is a hard saying, and reason at once asks, 'How can it be that there is but one power? Have we not found evidence of two powers in the age-long conflict of the lower and higher within us, temptation and conscience, selfishness and the tendency which makes for righteousness?' Yes, but that is only a partial truth. The deeper truth remains behind, the great fact which I have emphasised in the foregoing.

CHAPTER III

'I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE'

One of the hardest sayings of those who are most devoted to the Christian life is the statement that man is nought of himself, and can do nothing by himself. It is said that we must reach this point before we are fit to be Christians. The natural man, in all the fulness of enthusiasm for individual life, would rather believe the contrary. Such a man would readily admit that there is truth in the saying when applied to some people. Yet when reference is made to men of genius, the saying is indeed hard. And He who above all others seemed to be great in His own right was most emphatic in uttering this principle. In John v. 19, Jesus says: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.'

Both in Mark and in Matthew, Jesus almost rebukingly asks, 'Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is God.' What is the meaning of this surprising declaration?

Jesus makes a fuller statement (John v. 30) when He says, 'I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of My Father which hath sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.' In many passages Jesus declares that He is true to the will of the Father, that all His works are what the Father has bidden Him do. 'I live by the Father' (John vi. 57). He said to Pilate (John xix. 11), 'Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above.' Evidently the meaning of all these passages is that there is but one power, and that is God's. There is no room to doubt that Jesus means the statement literally, namely, that even He, 'the Son of Man,' can 'do nothing' without the Father, is 'not good' without the Father. But it is

no less true that *with* the Father Jesus is good, is a mighty power, so that He can say with unqualified conviction, 'I and my Father are one.'

Now there are those who take this passage to mean that Jesus and the Father are one and the same person, and others who reject the Gospel from which these sayings are taken as altogether mystical. But there is scarcely a passage in the Gospels which would not be sadly marred, if Jesus and the Father were to be absolutely identified, and this mere oneness taken as their clue. In the earliest of the Gospels (Mark i. 35) as well as in the latest, it is reported that Jesus prayed to the Father in a very human sort of way. He felt the need of going apart from the throng, sometimes on a mountain-top. The prayer to the Father in the garden is an expression of human agony. He sought if possible to avoid the agony, and even cried out as if forsaken. In Mark x. 6, Jesus speaks of God as 'Creator.' He confesses His inability to grant the privilege of sitting on His right

hand (Mark x. 40). He admits other limitations when He says, 'But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mark xiii. 32). Jesus gave thanks unto the Father, and frequently acknowledged the wisdom of the Father's all-wise insight.

Yet it is noticeable that Jesus acknowledges that He is the Christ, as freely as He admits the limitations of His human self, the man Jesus. What is the essence of Christianity, then, as Jesus taught and lived it? Is it the becoming as nothing? No, this is only the first stage, the negative side. It is the fact that each time an opportunity is presented to Him to win power or to do that which benefits the merely personal self, He does that which is for the Father, for all humanity. It is unselfishness, devotion, service, love.

There are three stages in this great process. (1) First, the discovery that 'There is no power but of God: the powers that be are

ordained of God' (Romans xiii. 1). This discovery includes the momentary realisation that of oneself one is and can do nothing. But even at this point we have the assurance that 'when I am weak then I am strong.' (2) Then we have the passing of the human into the divine, the temptations, and the wonderful triumphs over them in which the soul cries out to that which is below, 'Get thee behind Me, satan'; and to that which is above, 'Not My will but Thine be done.' (3) Finally, we have the crowning stage in which the soul can say in all sincerity, 'I and My Father are one.' But how can there be but one power? One might answer by asking, What other power can there be? Nature, do you say? But what is nature if it be not the life of God in visible action? Nature is good, beautiful, serviceable, but not without the goodness which it manifests and which is achieved through it; not without the revelation which makes its beauty known, not without the beings that enjoy its uses.

Do you insist, then, that man has power of

himself? Let us examine this proposition for a moment. Physically, man is part of nature, and entirely dependent on nature. As social beings, men are dependent on one another, but nature is their bond of external union; and whence comes that life which all men share if not from the same Source which nature manifests? Is man free to err, do you say, free to sin? But how can there be freedom of will apart from the moral cosmos where the standards of right and wrong obtain? To what end is he free? That he may do anything he likes? Rather say, He is free in order that he may become a completely moral being through his own experience. But he is free to think, he has independent powers of thought, you finally insist. But how can the mind think without the data furnished it from nature and the social life of man? The very dawn of consciousness is lost in the relationships of our social life. Nor can you, as a last resort, fall back on a belief in the soul as possessing independent power. We know nothing of

the soul except through what it does, and every moment of its consciousness is a sharing of objective life. In your dreariest moments of self-consciousness you are never alone. You cannot find a spot so solitary in your heart that God is not there. The most selfish plan that was ever devised has somewhat of the divine in it. The devil—who is he, except man's own regenerate or ignorant self, temporarily using the same power which the angels use?

The one power that is discovered to be universal in this first great stage is, then, the life of nature, of humanity, and the spiritual world which environs us in the unseen. That life is all, there is no other. Everything is done either for or against that. Its attributes are wisdom, love, goodness; it is omnipresent, and in its measureless kingdom all beings 'live and move and have their being.' To know that there is but one power is to know that the universe is good, that it is an order, a system wherein all things work together for the realisation of one great purpose. Hence

it is literally true that 'None of us liveth unto himself. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.'

Yet the beauty and the wonder of it is that there is both the son and the Father. 'I and the Father are one,' that is, one in spirit, one in will. 'I do that which is well-pleasing.' The oneness is harmony, adjustment; it is a oneness for the sake of service, of mutual work; it is that return to the sources of things which reveals their tendency, system, order, the recognition both of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. From the Christian point of view it is the solution of all our problems, the way out of all difficulties. For Christianity assures us that all our trouble comes from trying to be something of ourselves. The discovery that we are nothing and can do nothing is at the same time the discovery that we are of great consequence and can accomplish marvellous results, that is, if we press through to the end to see the meaning of this great truth, 'I and my Father are one.'

It has been customary to dwell on the negative side, the renunciation. 'We must submit to the will of God,' it has been said. But what is God? Consider the question thoughtfully, What is God? Jesus calls Him the Father, who so loves His children that He has provided for every want, who knows our needs even before we ask Him. There is not a recorded saying of Jesus which suggests aught except the utmost tenderness as attributable to the Father. God is not a harsh ruler before whom every one must bow in utter abjection. Jesus bids men approach the Father as one who is ever ready, who watcheth over all the world with unfailing love. We are to retire to 'the secret place,' the silence of the heart, and there enter into oneness with that which is for us. Receptivity is the word, willingness, not submission. We are not compelled to enter that secret inner world. We may continue to seek our own ends if we choose. But when we learn that 'no man liveth unto himself,' then the way is open to live for God, for all humanity.

There is nothing to give up, there is everything to gain. No man can be made a son of God; we are that already. The discovery that we are nothing of ourselves does not change the ultimate facts. It brings the soul into consciousness of that which is eternally true. It is the truth which above all other truths sets us free. It is good news, the gospel, the atonement, the way of salvation.

The will of God, therefore, is that which expresses His love and wisdom. It is the centralising power which gives unity to the whole life-process. Embodied as purpose, it is the one great end 'toward which all creation moves.' Again, it is the specific purpose in the life of each of us which makes for individuality, originality, the expression of the highest ideal. The will of God thus has a personal relation to each man. It is the will of God that each should be a man in the full sense of the word. It is His will that we should grow, develop, accomplish. But it is also His will that we should love one another, that we should be at peace. By

this sign especially shall we know that men really know that they and the Father are one, for the brotherhood of man is the logical consequence of this discovery. Furthermore, it is God's will that we should know the truth, that we should be upright, just, true. It is God's will that we should be healthy, sound, sweet, and pure; that we should be social, that we should live a richly active life. Thus the will of God is multiform, and it calls for multiform adjustments. It is not adequate knowledge of our oneness with Him merely to learn His will in a few respects. We must know that His power is working through us in every phase of our lives, to round us into fulness of being.

What meaning have these great truths as applied to your life and mine? Suppose you are in distress, in sorrow or suffering, and see no way of escape. It seems to have no bearing on your case to tell you that you and the Father are one. But consider the depth of meaning in this sublime fact. What is the power which you are using? What is it that

is active in you? Why are you in unrest? Do you realise that God is one with your life, even in the flesh as well as in the world of thought? 'Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit?'

In our narrowness of thought, we are apt to think of the will of God as applying to the moral world simply, or to something vaguely set apart as 'spiritual.' But what is the spiritual? What is it to be one with God if not to see the spiritual in everything? To know your physical life as it truly is, is to see that, too, as a part of God's will. God's will in the flesh makes for health, soundness, strength, beauty. When you feel the pangs of pain, after meeting with an injury in the flesh, the restorative powers of nature are at work there seeking to bring your organism back to harmony. To be one with God in that respect is to see the divine will expressed in that renewing activity. To oppose or fight the painful sensation as something foreign is to put yourself to that extent out of harmony with the Divine Will. To rise

above the sense of pain to realisation of the power, the will, the love, behind it, is to put yourself into that attitude where you can in that respect say, 'I and my Father are one.'

It is a marvellously fruitful thought—this recognition of our oneness with God. Ordinarily we think of it in a vague, mystical sense, and therefore lose its real meaning. To know it in detail is truly to know what it means, to put it to the test, even now, the next time you have an ailment, a trouble or a conflict. There is one great resource—'I and my Father are one.' What does this mean for you, here and now? In your heart of hearts, you desire that which your Father desires for you, hence there is no conflict. God's home is eternity. You as an immortal soul dwell in eternity. In that eternal world —'the city of God'—there is continuity of life; even death is an external incident simply. The soul is even now a son of God, it is saved now; it was never *lost*, it never will be lost. You can be separated from the Father in thought, in theory, but not in reality.

Here, then, is the starting-point—the eternal oneness of the soul with God. Go back to that, then see what this fact means in relation to your present problem. It seems difficult to establish a connection between this high realm of thought and the fact of sorrow and suffering and conflict. But that is because we make a separation between the natural and the spiritual, because we do not know for a fact that the will of God is universal. We must overcome this sense of separateness before we can know the depth of truth in the great law which we are now considering.

To be one with God is to be in heaven. Heaven is peace, rest. Therefore enter into that peace and rest in full trust and confidence. Realise it, declare it—'I and my Father are one.' Then recognise that truth in detail. According to the law which Jesus enunciates, everything has been provided for. That is the first step. Many people believe that who dare not take the next step. If you believe that everything has been provided, that the will of God is literally universal in

its care, then trust all, 'dare all, nor be afraid.' There is where the test comes. For that means giving up for the moment that which seems more sure. It is a venture. And here is where we so often fail. We are not quite ready to believe, we doubt, we distrust. But note the clear-cut character of the law as Jesus sets it forth. 'No man can serve two masters.' If any man would enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom, let him take up his particular problem into the realm of oneness with God, and follow the Christ: let him leave all for the Christ. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Matthew x. 37) ; yet he who is willing to make the test will find that he loves father or mother more. 'Take no thought for the morrow.' Trust that what you should say will be told you when you should say it. Do not even turn back to bury the past, leave that to bury itself. Seek not things first, but the Spirit. No one knows the hour of coming but the Father. He that doeth the will shall know the way, he who not only

hears the precepts but practises the sayings. There are many occasions when a solution of our difficulties seems impossible. 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible' (Mark x. 27). 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever' (Psalms cxxv. 1).

Now we know what Jesus meant by saying, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (Mark viii. 34). To deny oneself is to bring one's will into line with the Divine Will. Again it is clear why 'If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all' (Mark x. 14). The 'way, the truth, and the life,' the pathway of the Christ, is to take one's entire being up into the mount of unity with the Spirit, then to follow wherever the Spirit leads. First, cleanse yourself, be reconciled with those who are near at hand, then shall you see clearly what lies beyond. 'A good man out of the treasure of the heart bringeth forth good

things,' but he must first find the pure 'heart.' The will of God has meaning for all, therefore each must find the will for himself. The Christ is universal, but each must be a Christ-soul to make this actually true in the objective world.

This is the great meaning for you and me. It has been thought sufficient that Jesus lived and suffered nineteen hundred years ago. But Jesus was the one who dared to make the venture, to show that he really meant and knew that 'I and the Father are one.' He exemplified the attitude in regard to the situation of his day. The test of belief in him is to adopt the same attitude towards the smallest as well as the greatest circumstances of our own life. There is no universal formula which may be applied to all cases, with the hope that form shall take the place of spirit. There is a general law, but we prove it only by seeing it as a particular law. For each individual is unique; therefore each must learn in a special sense that 'I and my Father are one.'

CHAPTER IV

THE LAW OF THE KINGDOM

In another discourse we studied the Gospel message as summed up in the great truth that God lives, that the Father is in His Kingdom, close at hand. We turn now to another way of approach to this greatest of truths.

There is a way of looking at the life of Jesus which dwells upon the miraculous in it. This amounts to a disordered notion, since miracle is usually synonymous with interruption of law, at least such laws as we know. The entire ministry of Jesus is thus supposed to be a sort of intrusion into the ordinary course of things. Miracles were possible for a season, but now their day is past. There was a dispensation of prophets, but prophets come no more. A divine revelation was

made, but other literature than the Christian Bible is 'profane.' Thus the whole day and generation of such things was for a time, and the time is 'fulfilled.'

On the other hand, there is a point of view which dwells upon the congruity of the whole Gospel narrative with the history of the world. Even nature prophesied the coming of Christ. All nations were 'feeling after him.' The life of the ancient Hebrews was a long period of special preparation. The Old Testament gives evidence that the Messiah is to come. The entire mission of Jesus was a part of the cosmic life. Hence everything that has entered into Christian history since the time of Jesus has united his remarkable life with the life of the world.

If we turn from these contrasted points of view to the teaching of Jesus himself, we find him making many utterances which accord rather with the latter view. Jesus refers to the teaching of the prophets as pointing forward to his day. He accepts John the Baptist as a genuine forerunner. He con-

stantly reveals foresight concerning his own immediate future, and tells what shall come ere the day of righteousness dawn in its fulness. Some have thought that Jesus meant an immediate coming of a visible kingdom of glory on earth, and that he was a disappointed prophet. But in all these references he seems to have in mind the general law of spiritual regeneration. So well does he understand the nature of man, and the conditions to be met within and without, that he foresees a long period of conflict and of gradual leavening. His insight into the far, far future is as keen and true as his intimations of what is to befall him when the day of crucifixion shall be at hand.

Again, it is one of the most impressive facts of his ministry that Jesus seeks so persistently to make known the general law of the Christian life while he is yet with those who are at least, in a slight degree, prepared to hear. He performs good works wherever he goes. He is ever ready to speak the comforting word, meet the needs of those at hand.

The works he accomplishes among the sick and the distressed are among the leading evidences that he is really the Messiah. Without these many would not have believed. Yet in a sense the works are incidental. He explains the law of service as clearly as possible to his disciples who, at best, are only in a measure prepared to hear. He sends his chosen disciples forth to preach the Gospel and to heal, and again he sends seventy forth. Doubtless he made many explanations to his followers of which we have not the slightest record, explanations which would throw light for us on the few words which have been preserved. But we can infer that these teachings made clear 'the way, the truth, and the life,' not merely as pertaining to the particular history of Jesus but in reference to universal laws. Jesus was eager to have the great fact understood that, as the Kingdom is 'at hand,' every human soul is a dweller therein, and that as a son of God each could be guided in his work for that Kingdom, each could perform mighty works.

How else can we understand the great promise that those who are faithful shall do the same works, and even more remarkable things? What significance would his teachings have for the race if his promises were for that day and generation simply? Could he have been mistaken when he taught his followers not only how to pray but how to live? Ought we not rather to say that what he inculcated was universal?

Note, for instance, the implication of the declaration concerning prayer. All things have been provided by the Father; man has but to enter into that which is his own. Then Jesus goes on to point out the foolishness of distrust. Such trust as the birds display ought to be the least that a man should be satisfied to display. Why should one be anxious? What reason in the world is there for doubt? Do we not live in the universe of God? Is not the universe the work of the Father's hands? The labour of to-day ought then to be enough for to-day. When to-morrow comes we shall know what

stands next. Why do we need to know to-day? If we truly desire the Kingdom above all else, we have no wish to intrude our personal preferences; what we will is what the Father wills for us. Nothing could be clearer.

Jesus believed in the fitness of things in the divine order. His first public utterance, according to Mark, was, 'The time is fulfilled.' He did not wish to be declared the Christ until the proper season. He asked his disciples not to make known certain events and sayings till he was risen from the dead (Mark ix. 9.) He slips away from his pursuers a number of times. Yet, 'when the hour is come' he is ready even to be betrayed and crucified (Mark xiv. 41.) The implication is that he regards the entire experience as part of the divine plan. The illustrations he draws to make clear that plan are taken from the everyday phenomena of growth round about him, the law of natural evolution. Again and again he assures his hearers that the law of action and reaction

is inexorable, so that no man shall escape till the last farthing be paid. It is the measure with which we mete which determines the reward. But how beneficent is that law, decreed as it is by the love of God. It is everywhere the law of justice. No man would rebel if he really understood the law. To apprehend it is to know that there is no other. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

Jesus also recognises the value of all that went before. He is no iconoclast, no anarchist, but a believer in order. What went before was good in its place. What has now come fulfils it. Sometimes Jesus makes it known more emphatically than at others, that he may rouse his hearers and critics to its vital truth. He displays power which seems miraculous to the onlooker who beholds only the surfaces of things. But his constant references to the inner life show that he did not judge life by the appearance. If the divine order is really universal, it does not apply to this life alone. The invisible world

of the soul's more abundant life with the Father is more truly a revelation of the divine order. The 'son of man' came from that larger environing realm into the world of visible things to make known the true law of the Kingdom. By him who hath the eyes to behold the invisible is seen as well as the visible. All is clear to one who possesses the clue, and the clue to that which is spiritual is the spirit in man. The invisible Kingdom is continuous with this. The will of God applies to both visible and invisible. Hence Jesus can look forward and tell what he will do anew 'in the kingdom of God' (Mark xiv. 25.) Hence Paul declares that we know that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose' (Romans viii. 28). The purpose applies not alone to the distant end but to each step along the way. The Father has not only provided, but He watches us by the way. While we slumber and sleep, behold the Father sleepeth not. Many incidents by the way may seem

to prophesy failure. Sometimes our adversaries may seem unconquerable. But in deepest truth the Spirit knoweth no adversary. Not even the most distant day shall reveal a single exception to the law.

It was said of a certain man who lived the spiritual life, 'He of all men I ever knew really believed in the existence of God.' Why could this be said, in the face of the fact that so many profess belief in the Father? Because that man showed by his conduct that he literally, sincerely believed. He did not make a profession of faith, then show distrust by the next thing he did. He held that since God really lives and has provided all things, it is our part to give the Father time to fulfil His own purposes in His own good time. I knew that man, too, and his life was characterised by humility and gentleness. His heart was as tender as a woman's, his was a life of service, of readiness to respond whenever he could aid a soul in need. Believing as he did that everything 'works together for good' in the

fitness of time, he would sometimes express surprise if even the street-car he needed failed to be there when he came out of the house to make a short journey, so accustomed was he to find every detail in adjustment at the proper time. Consequently, he would sometimes question, when one of the details was lacking, whether it was 'best' to go. Such questionings naturally arise far along the way of the spiritual life, for it requires much familiarity with the conditions to know when one is moving with the Spirit.

It is plain that there is no way fully to know the law of the Kingdom except through the details of personal experience. Many people fail to consider even in a theoretical way what it means to have faith in God, for they do not pass beyond the stage of mere generality, whereas genuine faith is a matter of little details. But there are many more who are as yet unaware that there is an actual movement, rhythm, within their experience of which they may become conscious and to which they may become adjusted.

Yet this is what they have a right to expect if they are to take seriously the declaration of Jesus that everything has been provided and that it is merely necessary to seek in order to find. The chief distinguishing feature of those who really live by faith in God is this, that they have not only implicitly believed in the existence of such a rhythm of guidances but have actually sought and found it. There is no possession they would more gladly share with their fellows than the knowledge of this law, the reality of this experience. But the way of the spiritual life is such that no one can communicate the entire reality. To possess the realities of faith one must first have faith, and to have faith means to make a venture amidst more or less uncertainty. To many it seems too much to believe that God has provided everything in such wise that each detail will develop in the fulness of time. Accordingly they do not make the venture. Others are willing timidly to make test of the possibility. Still others are ready to say, Come what may,

I believe. To say this and then to act upon it may be to encounter doubt and to wander far from the way. But just this occasional deviation is essential to the final discovery of the way.

The first step, then, is reflectively to consider what is implied in the promises of Christ. Whatever doubts may arise amidst this philosophising, the next step is to make the venture, seek 'the way, the truth, and the life.' No soul ever cried out for light upon that way and turned away in utter darkness. All that followed the cry may indeed have seemed darkness, but it was not so in reality; for the cry was heard. It is part and parcel of the law of the Kingdom that the prayer shall be answered not in our own way and at the time when we insist that light must come, but in the Spirit's time and way. Always there is a sense in which the Spirit 'bloweth where it listeth.' There are conditions which we should not expect to control, which we must take on trust. The very essence of faith is the willingness to accept the law and the

conditions of faith's fulfilment. The doubt along the way, the experimental discovery of the rhythms of guidance, is essential to the reality which each must win individually in order to know that the law is universal.

It is extremely difficult for those who are accustomed to plan their lives so that they may know in advance precisely where they are to be on a given day, where the needed money is coming from, and so on, to depart from this sense of security and take up the cross of faith. To live by faith implies a willingness to be in a state of relative uncertainty, a readiness to give up anything and everything if so be that the Spirit wills. And yet, when all has been said, the change is really from uncertainty to certainty. For nothing is quite certain in this mundane world. The only real certainty comes to us when we begin to live for the realities which change not nor are separated from us, whate'er betide. To discover and enter into the eternal rhythm is to realise the enormous instability of the appearances of things. One begins to

attain repose at last. One knows that whatever comes all will be well with that which is dearest. No calamity can take from us the possessions of the Spirit. No prison, not even death itself, can separate us from the friends whose souls we really know. No experience can come that is not in line with the creative purposes of the Spirit. No trial will be put before us which we will be unable to meet. For now, at last, it is not merely a question of a struggling soul moving on amidst the darkness; for 'I and my Father are one.'

CHAPTER V

THE TEMPORAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'—Romans i. 20.

This statement by St. Paul of the fundamental relation between the unseen and the visible, the eternal and the temporal, broadly regarded, is one of the most important passages in the Bible, since it may be understood as an outline of an entire philosophy of the spiritual world. Nothing could be more explicit. The eternal world is not said to be a region by itself, apart from the world of time and space. Nor is the visible world merely a realm of appearances sundered from true reality. It is not even correct to say that the visible

world simply reveals that which its present condition shows it to be. It is literally true that the primal purpose of things, from the dawn of creation until now, is clearly made known. The world of things is not an illusion; it is a genuine revelation of the life of the Spirit in all ages. It is perfectly sound reasoning to start with the presented world and think directly from the visible to the invisible, from the temporal to the eternal. There is no reason for separation, there is no ground for agnosticism. On the contrary there is an unimpeachable basis for rational faith.

The test question, however, is this: Are we reading the visible language of the Spirit aright? For if the temporal reveals the eternal, and that which is made shows why it was made, the world of things can be understood only when it is regarded from the point of view of its universal life. The world system is a unity because it is grounded in the eternal being of God. Your natural life becomes a unity for you in so far as you see its relation to the spiritual ends achieved

through it. If, then, you would know the true character and value of any phase of your present experience, you must find in it a revelation of the Father, 'even his eternal power and Godhead.'

In these practical days, when so many are saying anew that 'the Kingdom is at hand,' a new emphasis is being put upon this great truth, and man is adopting a new attitude toward the conflicts of social evolution. For the old conception of life as a collection of warring forces, good and evil at strife, never quite loses its hold upon us until we are able to bring the facts of pain and evil into line and regard all activities as either lower or higher forces *in one experience.* There must be a sense of harmony, an insight into the unity of the whole, as well as an actual feeling of oneness with the world. When the old antagonism ceases, when all hatred is overcome and all fear departs, one begins to recognise this ideal of unity as a living power. There may be many unsolved problems. There is surely as much reason for moral zeal. But

the whole aspect of things is changed when the conception of unity passes into an actual reality. It is not necessary to know the meaning of every fact. There is a certain readiness to await developments, a new sentiment of worship, a new tolerance, a deepened love. For the power of solving the problems of our social conflicts is active in just those conflicts. Never shall we see their meaning unless we discern it in the visible as an earnest of the invisible. The whole reality is here before us working itself out. The world of immediate experience is a mystery to us only because we have not yet seen how wealthy just that experience is.

The issue is this: Shall we take chief account of the visible, transient phase of life, the human friction, suffering, strife and defeat, or shall we base our thinking on the divine fact, the power of the Spirit immanent in us, active whether we know it or not, and achieving its own eternal purposes? When the matter is put in this way the mind exclaims: How great the thought that we are

members of an unseen spiritual order, that it is God who is ultimately responsible, and we should trust in, work with Him! The whole conception of the spiritual unity of life appeals to the mind with such force that one resolves to live by it for evermore; it seems impossible ever to forget again that 'in Him we live and move and have our being.'

Yet, how easy it is to forget, to sink into the visible and disregard the invisible! It is only by repeatedly forgetting and coming back to this central thought that we at last begin to make it a reality. And just here we have an illustration of the great truth in question. Even in our forgetting, in our doubts, we are working out the great truth. A doubting time comes, for instance. Nothing goes well. One wonders what to do, what is coming next. Life for the moment seems burdensome. One feels the responsibility of it all, and wishes that some revelation would make plain what it is all about. Then it occurs to the doubter that just this revelation is being made every moment. And hence he exclaims, 'Why, I

am not regulating my life. There is One who lives in me who knows what this present experience means. It is not my plan; I am only one member of a larger life; all members of that life belong in a very profound sense to a Being who dwells within all and works for all.'

If you ask, How shall one live with cognisance of this great truth? the reply is that no plans are needed other than those which the present experience reveals. Do what is at hand, regarding it as a part of the unseen purpose, the eternal order of things. No worry is called for: the Power within all things is competent. There is nothing to fear, for there is no adversary save our own doubts and misuse of the gifts of life. All men are included in the forward march of things. Rest, then, in the present. See the beauty of life as it passes.

This kind of life is founded on something deeper than 'poise' as that word is ordinarily understood. For poise may be poise in self only. Such poise may easily be lost. The

true basis is *trust*, founded on philosophical thinking about this great fact which St. Paul so clearly states.

Try the 'hypothesis,' then, if it is nothing more to you. Start with the statement that, however much individuals may differ, however much social separateness there is in the world, ultimately there is one Being in whom we all live. Then consider how we are all related within that Being, so that there can be, is, no real separateness. Separateness is due to the notion that we are of consequence in and by ourselves. To lose the sense of separateness does not mean the sacrifice of individuality. It means that never again shall we try to understand or master ourselves simply as isolated units. We are related units. We have a common universe. We share in a general forward movement of life.

Even if our thinking verges on pantheism for a time there will be no loss in the end, for we shall grow into a deeper sense of unity. The practical precept of many pantheists is this: One ought not to injure another, for that

would be injuring oneself. In a profound sense this is true, for we are so closely related that we cannot injure another without injuring ourself. Hence, one must cease injuring and hating, one must do good and love, whether one would be happy and harmonious oneself or would make others happy and harmonious. Pantheism pushed to the extreme runs over into individualism, and the thought emerges with the conclusion that to see all things in the light of their relation to the unseen, eternal order is the true way to know them.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSFIGURATION

Of the many Scripture passages which one quotes in time of need, few have greater significance than this: 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' This great saying may of course be interpreted in a number of ways. In the present case I shall take it as representative of the power of the Christ within. To many people life seems a constant conflict between forces, some of which tend to uplift, others to draw the soul down into the meshes of sensation. The great need is some central power by the aid of which life may be made a unity. It is this great consciousness of the Christ within which supplies the needed principle.

According to a less enlightened method of thought and conduct it was customary to con-

demn part of man's nature as 'evil'; hence the conflict was intensified. The other extreme is to declare, unqualifiedly, 'All is good; there is no evil.' But enlightened thought always discriminates. It is neither a question of partial goodness and partial evil, on the one hand, nor of mere goodness in general on the other, but of the fitness of tendencies and powers in their proper place. To see the significance of our instincts and impulses, and to co-operate in thought and conduct with their immanent divine life is to be in a position where there is no longer any reason either for repression or for condemnation. Moreover, we are learning in these days that the various forces are transmutable into one another. As applied to the human organism, this great thought of transmutation resolves itself into a question of the object which is to be put before the mind in connection with each of the leading instincts or promptings.

A simple illustration of the principle of transmutation is the substitution of the love

motive for the temptation to manifest anger. When one's passions are stirred and tend to express themselves in violent reaction of some sort, if one pauses to inhibit this unseemly impulse and put another object before the mind, the same power which would have been misspent in violence may be distributed into numerous peaceful expressions of love. The transfer of interest to another centre means that a corresponding physical change has occurred. To carry out this principle in its completeness means complete mastery over the dualities of the inner life. It is a question in the first place of intelligent discrimination between the various promptings to action, that all may be guided according to wisdom. The second need is for sufficient self-control to carry out the ideals of wisdom.

Otherwise stated, it is a question of organisation. Here, within, is a mass of more or less conflicting powers. Like all lawless powers, these forces within us are likely to make havoc, to instigate riots. But the powers are not in themselves lawless, for

each has its proper place. The fault lies with us, in the way of a principle of organisation and another to find a sufficiently noble source of inspiration. Oftentimes we are in the position of Paul, who complained that he would do good, but found a warring principle within his members. The great trouble with most of us is that we do not know what course to pursue when unusual temptations and conflicts arise. At such times it is the greatest help in the world to know that there is a Spirit at hand which is equal to any and every occasion. If one cannot master the situation in any other way, it is very helpful simply to say over to oneself, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' To turn, while so saying, and look above in aspiration is to put the soul in the attitude of victory. There is great power in the spirit we feel when we meet these contrasted forces. The mind must be organised, must know the relationships of the activities at work within the body. To be deeply stirred, for example, is a good thing, but the question

is, How is it wise to be stirred, how shall one express one's more impassioned sentiments? Shall so-called righteous indignation, for example, be expressed in a merely conventional way, or is there a wiser way? Whatever the decision, it is plain that the life that stirs within us must have some outlet. It is for the man who is stirred to decide whether his forces shall play havoc or make for peace. The answer given will depend upon the degree of organisation attained.

But it is one point to see the need when thus lifting the eyes aloft to that which one can barely see, but which one knows to be a reality. What is needed is a source of help which shall establish a balance of power on the idealistic side, and this source is always above—that is, the Christ within is thought of as the power which ever leads on to ultimate victory. One looks towards it in inspiration, and by so doing changes the centre of activity within mind and body in such wise that transmutation is possible. The whole mass of forces active within is elevated,

as it were, to a higher level. One does not need to know all that is in process. It is not necessary to co-operate in thought with all the details of transmutation. The essential is to attach one's consciousness to the higher object and to maintain it there. In so far as receptivity is attained the face is literally transfigured, illumined. When the light thus shines upon the countenance the whole being is touched.

Clearly, the principle as thus stated is not merely a personal matter. To become centred in self is a relatively inferior method. There is positive need of a higher power. The soul is ready to acknowledge its own incapacity. For the moment it seems to be a serious question whether the warring forces or the ideal powers shall triumph. One's composure is tested to the utmost. One's faith is barely strong enough to withstand the strain. But to turn from the scene of struggle to the ideal picture of the Christ is to have the whole situation transformed. It comes over the mind with new conviction that the Christ is

literally present in the world, lifting it up from its state of earthiness. Nothing will prevent the soul from entering into the upward tendencies except unwillingness to admit a power that is higher than the merely individual self. The individual self is, if you please, striving to become the Christ. But there is a power in the attitude of humility above suggested which far transcends the attitude of mere self-affirmation. 'And I, if I be lifted up.' It is a question of being drawn heavenward by that which is above. The higher and lower, in the ordinary sense of the word, are already present. There is need of a third something which shall harmonise the contrasted array of forces. And nothing more deeply unifies us than this great power descending into us to weld together for Christ's sake all that we are and all that we would be.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEANING OF IDEALS

One of the most inspiring facts in human life is the power of ideals. Amidst the most adverse circumstances, where all things external point away from the life that is called ideal, the renewing belief in a better and a best ever and again makes itself known. In an age where there is more or less decay of faith in spiritual things, it is especially impressive to find a little company of people assembled to refresh their consciousness of the everlasting realities of religion.

This idealising power shows the tremendous hold upon man which the spiritual consciousness possesses. It is by this constant renewing process that we at last mount to the skies and conquer the wellnigh invincible. Even if our words be again and again the same,

there is an added power each time we look upwards: for it is the spirit in which we renew the ideal, not the symbol in which we clothe it, which gives it power.

These occasional moments wherein we have glimpses of the ineffable suggest that there is far more in man than our ordinary consciousness implies. The ideal which we would be shows by contrast more truly what we are. We ought then to take account of these highest moments in estimating the reality and worth of life.

Man has vainly tried to understand himself by study of his lower self. He has been weighed down by the fact of evil, and has looked at the darkness so closely that he could not see the light. The lower nature is ever a mystery if looked at alone. It is not to be understood by itself, any more than one can understand nature alone. Nature is a part of the manifested life of Spirit and is unintelligible apart from Spirit. The physical life of man likewise reveals his soul and is not to be comprehended by itself. Pain,

sorrow, struggle, the merely personal self, even the social organism—all these are parts of the whole. *Only the point of view of the whole* is capable of revealing to us the meaning of its parts. The lower is only comprehensible in the light of the higher to which it is contributory.

Man has been mystified by the contrast and struggle between what he has called good and evil. Thus he has been perplexed by dualism, conflict. He has emphasised the fact of struggle, sin, conflict. He has condemned God for making such a universe, condemned humanity, underestimated himself.

But when he begins to see that it is not the way life is constituted, but *the way he takes it*, that is consequential, he learns that the prime fault lay in his theorising. He mistook himself for a being of flesh and blood when he was and is a living soul, an immortal spirit. He saw conflict where there was in reality profound adjustment of means to ends. In deepest truth, there is unity. Lower and higher are simply diverse phases of expression

of one Life. There is nothing inherently or incurably evil in man. God has not planted anything vile in human nature. All parts of man's being are good, in proper relation and proportion. Man must be beautiful, must see the artistic relation of all that is in him, in order truly to understand.

It is the beautiful relation of all things in their unity, seen in the light of the whole, which reveals the true worth of life. We must not only refrain from judging by the appearance; we should not judge by the temporary or partial. We do not yet know our full selves. We should remember the idealising power and its profound significance. Everything that we pass through on the lower rounds of life has significance for the higher. We must learn to take the mountain-top vision.

Many times when we are weighed down by discouragement, we are judging by something that is so close to us that we do not behold it in true perspective. Oftentimes it is physical sensation which discolours our

mood. Again it is the disagreeable frictions of growth by which we are so absorbed for the time that we forget the beauty and virtue that are coming out of that process. We condemn ourselves a thousand times when it is not the real self at all that we are condemning. The real self is hidden for the time, and we have forgotten what manner of being we are. It is a great discovery, this sublime fact that the ideal expresses the truer self.

Whence springs this ever-renewing life? Is it from man alone? Those who believe that the immanent Life is the source of all change and growth, tell us that it is the perennial manifestation of the Spirit. It is the Spirit, not man, that is doing it all. We are not living to ourselves alone. Life is in the profoundest sense a unit, because all things are means to ends in the divine order. All spring from one source; there is no other source of power; there is no evil power. There is a constant going forth of the creative life, ever mounting the scale of evolution.

There is a divine pulse-beat, a progressive influx. This is the origin of these impressive renewals of the religious consciousness. That influx makes for good, for health, harmony, joy, beauty, individuality, service, love. Everything in man is contributory; there is nothing that can defeat the divine tendency towards perfection. The ideal is a dim intimation of what God would have us be. To-morrow we shall see the same ideal more clearly, and thus ever on and up.

The progressive influx has an immediate relation to each soul. There is a rhythm for each, a wise pace which the soul may learn to take. All else may be discarded except this divine leading; all anxiety, all care, all merely personal sense of ownership or responsibility. As we are not living to ourselves alone, we are living for humanity, for God. We may well take the pace of the life that flows from God, towards the ideal.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUALITY

THE word 'spiritual' is of such uncertain significance that one must first define it, and show what is not meant when one uses it, as well as what one chooses to have it mean. If we observe people who are said to be spiritual we find a great variety of opinions and customs. It is surprising to find how different are the likes and dislikes, the methods and terms of those who claim to be seeking the spiritual life. Again, it is interesting to find so many people of diverse beliefs insisting on just their way as the only true method. Thus the extremes vary from the hermit, the ascetic and the mystic, on the one hand, to the self-denying social worker, the æsthetic devotee, and the thinker who seeks to make a science of spirituality, on the other. It will be worth

our while to consider some of these types of belief and conduct before we turn to the more positive characteristics of the spiritual life.

There is apt to be a certain narrowness in the life of those who make special profession of the spiritual life. It is unnecessary to look as far back as the ascetic of the Middle Ages to find narrowness. Nor is it necessary in our Western world to prove the one-sidedness of asceticism. That experiment has been given up once for all. In our day this narrowness has assumed new forms. For example, some insist so rigidly on the coming of all things from within—the finding of the Kingdom of God in a particular way—that they will not lift a finger to co-operate externally. They seem to think that the things which are to be added will gravitate to them by a kind of mechanical process. Yet all the while they are shutting God out by condemning part of His word as 'external.' For example, such people are frequently heard to speak in a high-strung voice, full of

nervous tension. Suggest to them that it would be well to lower the voice, and you will be told, 'That is of the external.' But who gave man his voice? What more direct way is there, sometimes, of entering into the kingdom of peace than to lower the voice and speak in gentle tones? Others object to physical exercise, because that is 'doing things with the body.' But what is the body if it be not 'the temple of the Holy Spirit'?

I was once impressed by the comment of an energetic woman on the doctrines of a little paper devoted to a particular type of spirituality; 'Why, it leaves one so little to do!' The criticism was perfectly just. To that woman it would have been a backward step to lead so limited a life. The spiritual life is rich, it takes nothing from our activities, it adds to them. Consequently one is justified in turning aside from these narrowing modes of life.

Others declare that the spiritual life partakes of the 'impersonal.' But this word conceals many illusions. Those who declare

themselves 'impersonal' are usually the most personal of mortals. Penetrate behind the illusion and you will find dogmatism, egotism, pride. It is because people *want things to go their way* that they claim to be 'impersonal.' I have yet to find a person who made this claim who was not in reality 'throwing dust in the eyes,' as the French say. The man who is honest with himself knows that persons constitute the world. It is personal desires which prompt us, it is for personal reasons that we claim to be disinterested. Or, it is mere theory, borrowed from the Orient, for example, when we are told that the mother should love all children as she loves her own, that her children ought to show no preference for her. These are the ideas of people who subordinate family life and trample on the sacred ties of love. Nothing could be further from the spiritual ideal than this.

Far from this position is the noble ideal that true love deepens one's love for humanity. When the mother loves rightly, she loves all children, too; but only on condition that she

love hers first and in a special sense. That would be a strange child who should not show preference for those who have bestowed tender care upon it. To this tenderness a large social sentiment is in due time added. Thus the universal is *added* to the particular, but it does not absorb it. Be untrue at home, and your universality shall count for nought. Be truly a person and you may help mankind to attain freedom. There is nothing nobler than to be a person. One who is truly such is an agent of justice; he is fair, impartial. But to be a large-minded lover of truth and of your fellow-men is to be very far beyond that stage which has been denominated 'impersonal.'

Again the spiritual realm has been thought of as afar from man and from the world. Spirituality has been for Sundays, or for 'saints.' This idea of separateness has done more than most any other notion to raise a barrier between God and man. Only when we consider the entire universe, both large and small, as a revelation of the Holy Spirit,

are we in the right state to be truly spiritual. Each moment we live is a spiritual moment. Each hour may be made sacred by remembering how that hour came to be. Indeed, to become spiritual is precisely this: To show by our conduct that we believe that the universe is one, that there is one God, one supreme law. When we live in fragments we are not yet spiritual; we are materialistic or selfish. The Spirit unites. Hence the very heart of Spirit is love; hence it is that love is regarded as the supreme test.

Aristocracy is another of these negative signs whereby people show that their spirituality is not quite genuine. 'We are the chosen people'; others happen to be barbarians, heathen or infidels. On the other hand, the truly spiritual man is democratic. He recognises that every man is a son of God. There are no barbarians in the realm of the soul. Every person has faith, somewhere in his heart. If ignorant of his sonship, he needs our brotherly sympathy and help. As a son of God, he has a perfect

right to worship in his own way. The superiority of his critics is a sure sign that their hearts have not yet been touched. The greatness of our Master is most of all evident in those touching incidents where he welcomes the sinful into the Kingdom, where he associates with those people whom some of his modern followers (in word, not in spirit) would deem unfit to share their society.

Nor is the spiritual life mere submissiveness. Humility and receptivity are points along the way rather than goals of the spiritual life. The spiritual individual must become as a child, but he is also a man; and the active individuality of our Western world may become as true a servant of God as the self-abnegation of the East. Devotion is the positive word, not self-denial.

What, then, are some of the positive characteristics of the spiritual life? From what has already been said we see that broad-mindedness is prominent. The spiritual man is tolerant. He is conservative of the faith, he keeps the great ideal ever in view, and will

not allow himself to be turned aside. Yet just because he believes in the universality of the Kingdom, he knows that many pathways lead to the same summit. The conditions are secondary; *the kind of life* manifested under these conditions is the test. One man may seem to another to be an atheist, yet his critic may be compelled to confess that the one he condemns lives an exemplary life. As a matter of fact, some of the most pious men in all the ages have been scornfully condemned as atheists. Narrow indeed are our theological standards, but how broad is the life wherewith men truly show that they believe in the heavenly Father!

Again, we note that the Kingdom of God is far from being confined to the inner life. Yonder saint in his library chooses to serve God by tirelessly searching for truth. Another worships the Father through an elaborate ritual, with incense and symbolism. But, as a Roman Catholic once remarked, such 'externals' are only external to him who does not put the spirit into them. The person who

gives exquisite care to all the details of external life is often classified as 'not yet quickened' by one who emphasises the inner life, and who perhaps permits everything about his home to fall into ruin. But all our idols are not made of wood or stone. If one man is inwardly unquickened, another may be outwardly as undeveloped. It is not for the apostle of the inner life to cast the first stone.

The spiritual is both objective and subjective. It is many-sided, beautiful, universal. It includes both individuality and brotherhood. It pertains now to the contemplative life and now to the life of service. Sometimes it is 'good works' which most truly make it known, but again it is the quiet life of which the world sees and hears nothing. It does not have much to say about itself. The most spiritual people are not those who call themselves so. Spirituality is shown by the *life*, and you must be sure that you really know a man's life, for temperaments differ enormously.

Again, it is made known by a kindly spirit.

There is more genuine spirituality exhibited in a quiet little home where peace and love prevail than in many a church and seminary. Plain human life is much more acceptable than the self-conscious activities of those who set up as guides to all that is occult and unseen. It is easy to lecture about the next world and about reincarnation. It is easy to live a single life amidst a group of admirers. But the real test is apt to be home life. If one is kind and gentle there, one's doctrines have real worth. Hence it is the little deeds and words that tell. It is the gentleness amidst much that tends to provoke its opposite, the beauty which triumphs over ugliness.

Spirituality is also generous, liberal. It is not bargain-driving, nor is it economical to the last farthing. To try to buy everything for the least possible sum is to narrow the soul. Generosity invites beneficence, and liberality brings provision for its further existence.

It is needless, perhaps, to add that spirit-

uality is unselfishness. But one must surely declare that it is gladness, for long-faced people would fain persuade themselves that they have found it. It is practical, moderate, refined, noble, pure. It is for this world, and no circumstance is too mean to make it impossible of attainment. It does not condemn the present life as a 'dream,' nor indulge in the false generalisation that 'our senses deceive us.' For the natural life is the spiritual, seen from another point of view. It is not our senses that deceive us, for they are true and God-given; it is thought that deceives, and no thought is more erroneous than the conclusion that spirituality cannot be intellectually and naturally known. True spirituality is universal; it excludes no faculty in man. Hence we must penetrate the errors and negations which have obscured the spiritual life, and regard it in the pure, clear light of illumined intellect.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

FREEDOM is one of the great watchwords in all sects and in all departments of thinking. But it is apt to become a sort of idol as soulless as a man of straw. There are plenty of enslaved people who exult over their freedom, while oftentimes religious devotees are so 'free' that there is nothing left in their creed but 'pale negations.' As matter of fact, freedom easily passes either into its opposite or into license. It demands much thought to discover what true freedom really is, and even then it proves to be a decidedly relative term. It is doubtful if any one ever attains freedom by making it a mere end in itself, so elusive is this subtle principle which people talk so glibly about. For usually when people make a specialty of freedom they devote themselves

to changing their physical conditions. But first of all it is an affair of the inner life. It is not to be bought by giving away your material conditions, nor by deserting your friends or your wife. Travel abroad to get free from yourself, and lo and behold! that same self will pursue you like a fiend.

In the first place, then, freedom is progressively attained, and no devotee of it can outwit the laws of evolution. It begins with the awakening of the powers of the understanding, with illuminating self-conscious thought. There is first a timid recognition that I, too, am of some account, and then a more courageous expression of individuality. Conflict with the conventions of society soon follows, religious dogmas are thrown off, tradition is cast aside and idols begin to fall. A period follows when one looks with pity on those who are still creed-bound. But pride soon has its fall, and a new sphere of bondages is discovered. The social atmosphere which has been broken through proves to be thin indeed when compared with the darkness in

which personal and family ties are obscured. Sometimes it is those who love or appear to love us most who hold us most rigidly. It is not easy to keep the influential friend, yet overcome his undesirable influence. It is hard to cast oneself out of the family nest and fly with entire freedom. Oftentimes one must fly to extreme limits in order to return home and live normally. Then comes the contest with the personalities which one has reared into 'tin gods.' At times love turns almost into hate while the freeing process is going on, for 'the ties that bind' are often connected with that which is most undeveloped in the one who holds the power.

Then there are favourite teachers and books. Many people go through the whole of life shifting from authority to authority, not knowing that he alone is free who owns no authority save God, truth and the right, as made known to his own soul. To obtain a glimpse of this individual authority may be to overestimate it, hence to set oneself up as a law-breaker. But freedom does not

mean rulership over others. The freest man is still obedient to the laws of his land, his life abounds in exacting adjustments. But he it is who knows how to be free in spirit though physically in bondage to a world with whose laws he had nothing to do.

After a man begins to be free from particular environments and authoritative people he must still contend with varying mental atmospheres. We are one and all strongly tempted to be and think and act like our fellows. There is a subtle mental imitativeness that is almost past finding out. Some people never feel free before an audience. Those who are strong in some social environments capitulate in others. The ideal is to be everywhere and always the same person, to stand up valiantly and give one's message, whether the hearers be princes or paupers. Yet even this must be qualified. For a man must be free from his own creeds and habits, ready to follow wherever a freer spirit may lead. To dare to be inconsistent is indeed to be a candidate for freedom. Few are willing

to go so far as this. Hence they know very little what freedom is.

But freedom is not for self alone. It is as hard to grant freedom as to obtain it. If we bind another we imprison ourselves. To set free is to be set free. When we really begin to be free we shall no longer fear lest others trample on our freedom. It is a false sense of individuality which leads us continually to be on the defensive. When you once fully understand an imprisoning influence, and learn its point of contact in yourself, you are free for all time. It is only error that fights. Truth has nothing to fear.

The progressive mastering of our fears is almost synonymous with our evolution into freedom. From youth to old age the majority of us are slaves to fear, and there are fears enough to last even if we conquer one a day. Some fears haunt the mind like spectres for years and years. How few can say in veriest truth: I have nothing to fear!

The basis of freedom is a constructive faith on which we can stand implicitly. He who

knows what trust in God means is free. Hence freedom is in the profoundest sense adjustment to the divine order of things. Those who seek freedom for themselves by building up a nice little individualism create a new form of servitude from which they must some time become free. Freedom is not self-assertion. If we would really be free we must be free from self, too. Beneath all the diversity of doctrine this is the great truth underlying many theories of human life. Some theorists talk about 'Karma,' some about sin, heaven, and hell. But, whatever the term, all agree that something pursues us wherever we go, in this world or the next. From this 'something' that survives all external and all bodily change, only the soul that bears it can set us free. When all is narrowed down to the last analysis, the bondage of self is found to be the real bond.

Freedom is not, then, a matter of conditions; it pertains to the self, its conditions and laws of consciousness. In so far as we know the self, we master it. Hence it

is not to be fought or cast out. True wisdom turns slavery into liberty. The same condition enslaves or frees, according to the way we take it. In the same way the self makes for bondage or freedom according as we use it. Freedom comes to us as rapidly as we wisely transmute the lower nature into the higher. It is thus the silent forces of the Spirit which set us free. Free in spirit, it makes less and less difference to us how we are materially conditioned. We are ready to receive the developments of life as they come. We meet each event with freedom if we understand its law and its significance.

Yet while we become freer in spirit we no longer care to break off personal and natural relations. In deepest truth we are ready for the first time to be truly a friend, a husband or a wife when we are spiritually free. For we are no longer trying to manage our friends, nor are we subject to their management. To be free is not to be 'impersonal' but to be a true person, one who is strong in individuality, yet equally strong as a friend

to all humanity. One loves people all the more, but as equal souls, among whom one counts for one only. It is a mark of true greatness when another meets us as an equal, when there is free 'give and take,' although the other is far wiser than we. Thus true freedom pertains to the highest spiritual life. It is akin to gentleness, peace, and love. It comes in fullest measure to those who have felt the touch of the divine presence, who have been 'born from above.' The truth which 'makes free' is in the last analysis the most profoundly spiritual truth. Thus the many stages of progressively attained freedom finally culminate in the freedom of the soul through knowledge of its true nature as a son of God. This freedom comes not when we are consciously seeking it as an individual possession. It is the spontaneous accompaniment or result of the highest life of service for our fellow-men.

CHAPTER X

CAN WE CHANGE OUR DISPOSITIONS?

THE remark is frequently made that we must take ourselves as we are; it is useless to try to change one's disposition. Let us examine this statement to see how much truth there is in it. What is the meaning of the word 'disposition'? As ordinarily used it is a rather vague, ambiguous term, meaning one's general way of taking life. It applies partly to physical, partly to mental characteristics. In so far as it refers to the body, the statement that we cannot change our dispositions is obviously false; for the health may be greatly improved, nervous and excitable tendencies may be brought into subjection. Oftentimes the element which people complain of in themselves, that is, in their characters, is in reality physical disturbance of some sort. Victims

of lawless tendencies, they cry out that they must 'grin and bear it.' But few errors could be greater than the mistaking of bodily conditions for traits of character. The mind may indeed have a certain way of meeting unruly physical tendencies. Yet both this 'way' and the tendencies may be changed. In these days of practical idealism we are learning how to master and be free from the conditions of the body. It is absurd to complain when we have within us the power to attain self-control and freedom.

It is clear that we must distinguish between the body and the self or soul. When we turn from the body more specifically to the self, we learn that the self is a complex being and demands careful analysis. The fact that we are dissatisfied, and wish we might change our dispositions, shows that there are different aspects of the self. What we complain of is not the full self, but *the lower nature*, through whose experiences the higher nature is evolving. What causes us to complain is the higher nature within us spurring us to develop-

ment. The lower self *can* be changed; it *is* changing all the time. We may come to consciousness of that change and aid it by idealistic thought.

The profounder question is this: Do we really desire to change the higher self? How many of us understand what the higher self is? The whole question of individuality is involved in the answer. In the ultimate sense of the word, individuality evidently means both one's own most intimately personal self, the true ego, and the divine ideal. The important thing in life is to realise the diviner self in all its fulness, to express it for the good of humanity. Individuality is the centre of the soul. It is that which is original in us. When we pause to consider, we discover that there is nothing we would sooner lose than this higher self. As for changing it—why, it is one's soul. What one really desires is not to change but more nobly to realise and manifest the soul.

When we begin to look at the self from this higher point of view, we learn that a vast

amount of time is misspent in the attempt to change the self. We try to 'make ourselves over,' when in reality there is nothing we would rather be than that which we truly are. We try to reform other people. We make all sorts of arrogant assumption about them, as if we knew better than they what they ought to be. After a time we give up in despair, conclude to let people be themselves, and at last we begin to display tolerance. The next step is to tolerate oneself. We think that because other people have what we call 'faults' they are not as they should be. This is, of course, true in a sense, since a fault is in part a condition of evolution from lower to higher, and every one ought to manifest the higher self. But from another point of view a fault implies a limitation, and we are limited in order that we may do our work.

You complain of yourself because, being a sensitively organised, easily influenced soul, you are not stolid and immovable like your friend. Your impervious friend envies you because you are so finely organised. Both the

sensitiveness in you and the stolidity in your friend are limitations which make your lives less beautiful and involve you in trying experiences. But the qualities which you each possess enable you to do your work. Your sensitiveness will bring you no pain when you understand it and direct it aright. Your limitations will be your virtues when you see their true place.

Therefore, a time comes when one ceases to complain and is willing henceforth to take the self as it is and let it do its work in this beautiful world. Those who complain so much about themselves are usually those who find fault with others and condemn the world. Begin to see the wisdom of things as they are, and you will find new beauties even in yourself. This by no means implies self-esteem or self-contentment. To begin to discover what you are may be to become more discontented with yourself than ever, that is, discontented with your lower self. But while you see wherein you are undeveloped you will also see how to change

yourself—that is, how the higher self may come into power.

There is a sense, then, in which we can change our dispositions and change them most effectively. One's disposition is one's way of thinking and acting. Bring the higher self more into play and new habits will be formed. A person of a nervous, excitable disposition may become in a few years unusually calm and moderate. The change does not come about by working upon the nervousness and trying to calm it, but by cultivating inner peace, poise, equanimity. Best of all, the development of a wiser philosophy of life is accompanied by peace of mind. It is remarkable what changes may be wrought by persistence in the wiser direction. Some who have changed themselves from restless, excitable persons to moderate, well-poised individuals, find it difficult to persuade people that they were once entirely lacking in repose.

Finally, the discovery that we can change our dispositions means that selfishness is

not unconquerable. Everybody knows that selfishness will yield if one will but make the effort. There is no excuse for taking this part of ourselves as we find it. Before each of us there is a spiritual ideal, and no one knows how far and how high the endeavour to realise the ideal may carry the soul. Just as in a democratic country it is always possible for people in the common walks of life to rise into power, so in the spiritual universe 'there is always room at the top.' There is a more or less fixed individuality within each of us, but even this may be subject to change. At any rate, no man fully knows himself as yet. Meanwhile, the most rational procedure is to assume that we are practically modifiable without limit. No one can hope too much or dare too much in a universe where perfection is the ideal, where the Christ spirit is ever ready to uplift, and where the grace of God enables every man to 'grow in grace.'

CHAPTER XI

THE INNER LIGHT

In nearly all departments of human endeavour art precedes science, and the illuminations of the inner light were manifest long before there was a theory of individual guidance. Wherever spiritual religion is found, there the inner light is recognised in life, if not in philosophy, for the basis of such religion is the shining of the divine presence in the soul of man.

The sages of ancient India were believers in the inner illumination to such an extent that their whole philosophy was founded upon its revelations. All prophets, seers, and writers of sacred Scripture were believers in this inner sense; otherwise they would not have deemed it possible for God to communicate through them. Mingled with faith

in God was therefore a noble self-reliance, that reliance which Emerson so strongly inculcated. But, fortunately, emphasis was placed not upon the human but upon the Godward side. Thus these ancient seers teach us a lesson of receptivity, a lesson of great consequence in an age when there is a tendency to tamper with divine revelation.

Socrates believed most truly in the inner guidance, although he emphasised its ethical rather than its spiritual side. All the Greek philosophers were in a profound sense believers in individual guidance, and the Greeks were more free than most people to develop their individual thought. In fact, it was the influence of Greek thought which brought about the liberalism of the Renaissance and laid the foundation of modern individual culture.

Had the early Christians followed the teaching of Jesus in all its fulness there would have been no necessity for the inculcation of a special doctrine of the inner light. But, from the time when Christianity became

external, an authoritative religion with official representatives, the foundations were gradually laid for the age-long conflict between the right of individual thought and the canons of ecclesiastical rulers. Thus a doctrine of the inner light became a necessity, and that which originally had been a natural accompaniment of all religious beginnings, became a prize to be won by utmost skill in evading persecution and the inquisition.

Jesus besought all men to look within where the Father had already provided guidance for all. The ecclesiastical authorities bade all men obey the dictates of venerable creeds and formalities. It became heretical to announce anything new, and thus the life went out of the inner world; and the supreme principle of the inner light was completely obscured, namely, the law that to be true to its guidance one must be ready to break with the past, must constantly grow.

It is interesting in this connection briefly to note the history of the modern struggle for liberty of thought, a struggle which has had

much to do with the rediscovery of guidance in its more rationalistic form.

One of the earliest of medieval philosophers to prepare the way for the recovery of the inner authority was Abelard, born in Brittany in 1079, who taught that reason is independent of theology, and is capable not only of explaining theology, but of enouncing doctrines of its own. Arnold of Brescia carried this heresy to Italy, in return for which he won banishment and finally public execution in Rome, in 1155. The humanism of the Renaissance was of incalculable assistance in preparing the way, as its whole tendency was the emphasis of human right, the right to be an individual, to be broadly cultivated, and cherish new thoughts.

But it was the religious reformation in Germany which furnished the fullest opportunity for the development of the inner light. The authority of the pope had been discarded, and a new authority had to be substituted. This was ostensibly found in the Bible, yet it was more truly the right of individual

reason. Direct personal experience thus became the foundation of religion, and once more religion was a live thing, not a dead husk or shell. Luther believed in the natural man, as opposed to the merely ecclesiastical man. Melancthon supported him by actually enouncing a doctrine of the 'natural light.' The way was now open for freer individual development, although for many generations it was necessary for philosophers ostensibly to agree with theology while secretly cherishing doctrines too heretical even for Protestants to tolerate. Jean Bodin, a French liberal thinker of this period, wrote a book so heretical that for ages it was known only in manuscript form and was not published until 1841. Yet the heresy which caused the withholding of this book was the simple principle that a Catholic, a Lutheran, a Calvinist, a Jew, and a Mohammedan, might meet on a basis of spiritual equality, each one retaining his own faith!

Lord Herbert of Cherbery was a firm believer in the inner voice, and greatly aided

the development of religious naturalism in England. Jacob Boehme rose from the humblest ranks in Germany and developed a complete mystical doctrine on the basis of the soul's inspiration. With him the inner light became a purely spiritual sense, and he seems as free from external authority as the great prophets of old.

The growth of inner individual experience was greatly aided by the growth of science. Here the bondage to be thrown off was not merely the ecclesiastical authority, but the scholastic interpretation of Aristotle, so long the accepted theory of nature. Nicholas of Cusa made a great stride toward freedom of scientific thought when he declared that all our points of view are relative. The discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo greatly strengthened this position, and the growth of individual thought might have proceeded as triumphantly in Italy as in Germany had it not been for the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno, and the caution in expression of scientific opinions which his fate inspired.

Galileo dared not stand by his private thought, but set an example which was followed by many who might otherwise have made a great reputation in natural philosophy. Descartes concealed his acceptance of the Copernican astronomy beneath a subterfuge, while he hardly dared to express himself on ethical questions. No one will ever know how great a wealth of knowledge was hidden in the minds of those who dared not express it lest it conflict fatally with the doctrines of the church. Hobbes, who thought out a complete system on a materialistic foundation, taught that religion is an affair of the state, and his doctrine is rather a reaction against the liberalism of the Renaissance and the Reformation than a development of free thought. And Spinoza was persecuted by both Jews and Protestants, even in free Holland.

Every well-informed reader knows more or less about the persecutions endured by George Fox and the other Quakers. This brings us to our own country, whither many

of the Quakers came. It brings us to Unitarianism in its struggle with orthodoxy, to Emerson and more recent times, when the inner light is the guide of thousands of liberal thinking men. The subject is so familiar to-day that we forget the ages in which men struggled to attain the freedom we now enjoy.

CHAPTER XII

FAITH

The opinion prevails that many religious customs and beliefs have been entirely outgrown. Those who are still in the process of transition from old creeds to new beliefs usually speak rather extravagantly of the notions which have been 'for ever discarded.' Doubtless many forms of religion are permanently outgrown. There is a measure of truth in the extravagances of the iconoclast. But deeper knowledge of the religious life shows that the essentials of religion remain practically unchanged from age to age, and are nearly the same the world over. We may think we have wholly discarded the atonement, but the spiritual fact for which the theory of the atonement stood is still a profound part of our lives. We may have so far

rejected prayer in all its objective forms that we deem all prayer foolish. But something has taken the place of the old petitions, and we pray as fervently as ever. The same is true of faith. No man can pursue his work without it. It is one of the factors which make an undertaking possible in this universe of ours, where so much is unknown in advance of experience.

With all his exact knowledge of the working of natural forces, the scientific man must have faith in the universe, in himself, and in reason, in order to carry forward his special researches. Faith in law, in system, underlies the modern scientific conception of nature. The truth-seeker has faith in truth despite all evidences which seem to prove that he never can attain it. The philosopher carries his constructive reasoning as far as he can, then falls back on faith to complete what his imperfect insight does not reveal. Whether we know it or not, the doctrine we live by is really a certain faith which we are willing to abide by, to test unto the end. Faith will

always be essential to the spiritual life. Trust in God underlies all religious beliefs and modes of conduct. Religion is, in a sense, faith, pure and simple.

What is needed, then, is to bring the facts of faith into consciousness, to see how large a part it plays in life, and to have an intelligent faith, based on knowledge of spiritual law. In reality, faith is the motive power which sets the inner life into activity. We live as members one of another in the divine order, and faith in the larger sense applies to the spiritual order of the universe. In another sense it relates to our human part in the life of things. Despite all that we know about the spiritual working of events, with all the assurance our faith gives us, we must make a certain venture, take 'a leap in the dark.' Man must have faith in himself, in his own power to make the uncertain move. The attitude of faith involves a paradox, then. It is a kind of knowledge of one's self and of the universe which amounts to practical certainty. Yet it is faith precisely

because it involves an element of entire uncertainty.

Faith, however, is not or need not be blind. The New Testament makes it plain that the operation of faith is a law of the spiritual life. Jesus explicitly says, 'According to your faith be it unto you.' 'If ye have faith and doubt not' is the principle. Little faith accomplishes little; great faith accomplishes almost anything. Paul assures his followers that in reality they 'walk by faith, not by sight.' Faith is a hidden intuition which guides us despite the illusions of ordinary thought and life. 'Before faith came we were kept under the law.' Now that faith has come there is 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' Through faith we know by an indubitable insight that 'the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear.'

But faith is far more than a general attitude of trust in the integrity of things, and in our own power to make ventures. In Acts, the

apostles are frequently spoken of as 'full of faith and of power,' that is, imbued with the Holy Spirit. They not only had faith to believe but faith to do. This is the point where many fail. They have a general faith, but when the little tests come they are found wanting. But since 'faith without works is dead,' and by works 'it is made perfect,' there must be a way to show that one really has faith.

What does Jesus mean when He says, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole'? Mere belief could not do this. If there is a 'prayer of faith' which shall 'save the sick,' there are actual resources upon which we may draw. By faith we put ourselves into an attitude of union with the wisdom and love and power of God. We put ourselves in living relation with a superior order of things. We receive power, and this power can be used. Hence we should bear in mind the spontaneous results of the spiritually dynamic attitude, and have yet more faith. Those who were healed by their own faith, who

merely touched the hem of Jesus' garment, unwittingly took a certain step, subconsciously broke free from their old conditions, felt the quickening power of spiritual life. What they did unconsciously we may accomplish intelligently by entering into the deeper knowledge of faith and its works.

Faith also involves a certain willingness to meet whatever the future may bring that makes for spiritual evolution, even though more or less suffering is involved. 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.' 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' and hence is the implicit assurance that our deepest longing shall be satisfied. But the implied intuition relates rather to the outcome than to the conditions of its realisation. Much is usually implied that seems in no way to belong to the original insight. It is well for us, no doubt, that we do not at the outset know all that is involved in our faith, for in

many cases we might not have sufficient belief to make the venture. The assurance that the end will actually be attained if we are faithful, is far more important than any knowledge we might have in advance of the hardships along the way. The prime essential is willingness to meet and profit by that which faith may bring, whatever it may be, well knowing that it will work for the good of all concerned.

The knowledge in advance of experience which some demand before they are willing to walk by faith is precisely that knowledge which cannot be given us without depriving us of the benefits of experience. Whether all the details are known to angels or others who may watch over us, at any rate it is better for us not to know as yet. A time may come when it will be right for us to know many events before they happen. The important fact just now is that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for.' If we already possess the essence we need not know the details. To possess the essence is in-

tuitively to know the end. To know or feel the end, however dimly, is to be so confident that one is little concerned with the details; one awaits their coming as parts of the beautiful novelty which ever constitutes one of the greatest joys of life. The essence and the end pertain to that which is eternal, the details relate to the passing and the temporal. Hence faith really involves a knowledge which is all that one could ask, provided one really understands.

Again, to possess the essence is to be in relations of adjustment with the rhythms of guidance which progressively lead to the end and include all the essentials along the way. Finding oneself amidst an experience which has come as a heavenly gift, the important consideration is to let that experience develop in its own way, lead to its own ideal end. This means far more than at first appears, for we are prone to interfere, to hurry the experience, or arrange the details to suit ourselves. Multiform adjustments are called for along the way, if we are to follow a heaven-

sent experience to the end. For experiences that touch us deeply call for personal relationships of many kinds, and with each new relationship we are likely to mingle merely personal desires, to interfere with the free development of the experience. If we can but keep hands off, then the seemingly impossible will happen. When the trials and tribulations along the way have been passed one looks back upon them with the discovery that in veriest truth we already possessed the essence at the outset. The moral is, more faith for another time, more willingness to believe that the smallest details have been provided for.

Faith, then, implies a certain willingness to believe when everything that is immediately apparent seems to prove the contrary. This statement has particular significance for all who believe in the everlasting realities of religion and the moral law, despite the negative conclusions of the critical philosophy. The critical philosophers are fond of dwelling on the limitations of human know-

ledge and human nature, they place so much emphasis on the human conditions of guidance, revelation and the rest, that everybody begins to question whether God can really make Himself known to man, whether all so-called revelation be not merely man's own thought. A deeper understanding shows that it is precisely through these seemingly exclusive relativities that the power and wisdom of God are made known, that without the finite conditions there could be no revelation. Thus a deeper faith believes in the great realities despite the most serious doubts that can be raised. The important factor is seen to be, not the finite condition which apparently hinders or defeats, but the divine infinitude which transcends all limitations as means to ends. Hence a reaction sets in from agnosticism to faith. One sees that agnosticism was merely a halting thought along the way, that the true meaning of the divine revelation was not seen until the conditions of its coming were known.

Thus faith passes through three stages.

It seems to be complete when it merely possesses its object in immediate, uncritical form. It seems to be swept utterly away when the period of questioning sets in. But in the first stage it is faith without reason, hence the first wind of doubt disturbs it. In the second stage one seems to be separated from all that is most real, as if the foundations of life were being taken from under one's feet. Yet faith regains its composure and at last becomes stable and intelligible. Only while one overestimates the unquestioning faith of childhood will one ever be fearful that faith's objects may be taken away. The gains are enormous as the mind passes into the third stage. In the end faith proves far more real than what is ordinarily called knowledge. One does not expect one's knowledge to overtake faith. Faith pertains to the reality which Emerson denominates 'the flying perfect.' Fortunate are we if we care more for the developments it brings than for the stability of what usually passes as knowledge. To have faith is to be alive.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VALUE OF PRAYER

THERE is profound significance in the good old custom of beginning every important undertaking, starting each day with prayer. In these days, when many have outgrown the terminology of the older prayers, there is a tendency to omit prayer altogether. In many families the habit of prayer has been maintained as a matter of form, while its value has been forgotten. It is important to consider the function of prayer in all times and places, in order that its permanent element may be distinguished from its forms and misuses.

It is a superficial reaction against the custom of offering prayer, to allege that the language in which prayers are expressed is sentimental and absurd. The language of prayer is incidental. It takes the form of

man's beliefs. When man believed in an overruling Providence, who could 'do anything,' it was customary to ask for all sorts of foolish things. It seemed necessary to inform God just who were ill in the parish, and to pray for certain specified persons in a specified way. The growth of the conception of natural law has had much to do with the change of attitude in regard to these prayers; for, in a universe where all things are provided according to law, it is of course absurd to persist in asking for the unlawful. The old conception of Providence has gone, and with it the notion that God needs to be informed concerning the needy and the sinful. Man now believes in the God of uniformity and system, hence he no longer expects God to upset the divine order to suit his caprice. But a new conception of Providence has come forward, and the reason for prayer is as persuasive as ever. No true prayer was ever a capricious or selfish thing. Nor does true prayer consist in mere petition.

From the point of view of form, the older

prayers were decidedly inconsistent and un-Christian. One of the fundamental propositions of the Christian faith, as set forth by Jesus, is the declaration that the Father already knows what things we have need of before we ask Him, that all things have been provided, that His loving care is perfect. Since all things have been arranged in accordance with the highest wisdom, no man clothed in his right mind would have them changed. Since that loving care applies even to the sparrow, to the little details, and to the morrow, there is nothing to be added. Any prayer, then, which shows distrust, the least tendency to regulate things, is un-Christian. The conception of a law-governed universe is as clear and explicit in Jesus' sayings as it could be made. Man need not have waited until modern science had taught the reign of law, to see that the old idea of Providence is not a true conception. Providence means a looking ahead. The contingencies of life are provided for far in advance, not when they arise and when an over-anxious man informs an ignorant God.

Providence is wisdom, and the wisdom of the divine order is eternal.

According to the conception of prayer which Jesus makes so persuasively clear, prayer does not and cannot change or improve anything in the divine order. The human part is not to alter or to improve, but to discover and to follow. Jesus makes a number of emphatic statements about certain kinds of public prayers, uttered for effect, which rule out certain prayers frequently heard in our churches, as 'vain repetitions.' The true prayer is uttered 'in secret,' that is, it is an affair of the heart. One must first turn aside from the world of show and self-seeking, and *take a certain attitude of soul.* This may be done in public or in solitude. The essential is that humble, receptive *attitude,* which puts one in a position to become aware of that which has 'already been provided.'

Prayer does make a difference, then. It has its place, a very necessary place, in the religious life. But it makes a difference with man, not with God or the universe. For man forgets

that the providence of God applies to all things. He wanders away in pursuit of his own little plans. The great resource is to drop all that, seek the solitudes of the Spirit, in the inner world, meditate on the wisdom of God, and once more feel the forward rhythm of the divine life, as it carries all things forward to completion. That which is discerned within, in the secret place of the Most High, shall presently be made known openly, in the external life. The reward shall be in proportion to the prayer, that is, in accordance with the receptivity, the adjustment to the divine rhythm. In so far as the prayer is uttered in a forgiving spirit, the result will be of the same character.

But should one express the prayer in definite words? Should one ask for specific things? Certainly. From one point of view, even the old petitions were true prayer. The form of words matters little if the right spirit is put into them. Prayer is a certain attitude, an attitude toward the ideal. It is worship. It lifts the mind into a higher state, puts it

into a certain spirit. The world of prayer is a large, universal world. We may not receive precisely what we ask for, or receive it when we ask for it. We cannot tell when our prayers may be answered, or how. But the essential is to put the soul once more into the divine current of things, in order that whatever may be wise shall come in its own good time.

It is well to ask for specific things, because we then take a definite attitude of worship and readiness. And it is as true as ever that our prayers are answered in a very wonderful way. Prayer is one of the factors in the law of spiritual supply and demand. Here is a person, for example, who has resources to draw upon, power to impart, wisdom to give. Here is another who needs help. The first consecrates himself and his resources to the uses of the Spirit. The second reaches out for help. Both put themselves into the divine current of things, so that one is guided to give, the other to receive. Both have fulfilled the divine will, yet God has changed nothing.

The value of prayer as the right beginning of things is therefore this: Knowing that there is a divine order in which all things have been provided, we naturally desire to lift the new undertaking to the higher level and launch it in the higher spirit. If it be not worth beginning with prayer, then we had better not begin it. If irreverent people looking on, forgetful of the value of prayer, scoff at the notion, then show by your conduct that the spirit of true religion is still abroad in the land. If there are young people present who smile at your supposed weakness when you begin the meal with a silent or spoken grace, let them once more feel the spirit of reverence which is so often lacking in these days. If you would have your day be all that it can be, if you would sleep the sleep of the little child, commend your spirit unto the Father in the good old fashioned way. Even if you have persuaded yourself that God is some sort of impersonal 'Absolute,' be human again, and pray to God as the Father, and make the relation as personal

as you please. The God of the heart is the true God. Hence you may well disregard the abstruse arguments of the philosophers. God answers prayer as much as He ever did, and He has been answering it all down through the ages, because all down through the ages it has been necessary for man to seek readjustment with the Father. Man has not been able to manage his life alone. The divine Spirit has ever moved upon him. It is ever ready to aid. On the Godward side the power that is active in prayer is unceasing in its good works. The man who prays 'without ceasing' is the man who ever carries about with him the realisation that 'my Father worketh hitherto and I work.' Thus prayer is part of the creative life of God. It reveals the divine grace, and the divine grace is no respecter of persons.

From the point of view of form, the Lord's Prayer may be unsatisfactory, for it asks God not to lead man into temptation, and of course God would not do that. But prayer is to be understood in the spirit, not by the letter.

The Lord's Prayer expresses the aspiring spirit in its desire for liberty. The form matters little. Some of the recorded prayers of Jesus, when the crucifixion was near, seem a little strange when we consider who uttered them. But in those prayers the human self is revealed in its ascent to the divine as it is revealed nowhere else in all literature. The supreme prayer is the consecration of the soul where the way is indeed hard. To travel upon that way even Jesus found it necessary to go apart into the mountain to pray. If He needed it, how much more do we! And there is no problem in the wide range of our needs and difficulties which will not be carried forward to its solution by taking it up into the mount of prayer. Never mind, then, if your words often fall below the standard, and reveal inconsistencies. The essential is to pray, really to pray. Do that, and the other things shall be added.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Few words in Christian thought and life have more meaning than the inspiring word, 'Father.' The word was by no means new in the sense in which Jesus used it. It is a universal term, and has been used in all ages and among many peoples to signify the highest conception of God. But it receives a new spirit in the life and teachings of Jesus. The whole life and meaning of the Christ is summed up when Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven and speaks 'as no man spake,' addressing God as the Father. Hence in a peculiar sense it is a Christian word. In those memorable passages in which the human side of Jesus is most clearly seen, Jesus is always reported as addressing the Father, either in a spirit of thankfulness, or in mo-

mentary despair lest the human shall not be equal to the task set by the divine. On the other hand, the idea of the divine fatherhood is central in the entire Gospel teaching, in the conception of the Kingdom of God as already 'at hand.' Thus the word has a special meaning for the struggling soul, alone in its anguish; and a meaning for every moment of social conduct, inasmuch as it implies the supremacy of love and the brotherhood of man.

For each one of us, however humble, however learned, it is the word 'Father,' with all that it implies, which keeps the thought of God from becoming vague, mystical, or pantheistic. When we try to define what we mean by the idea of God, it is easy to yield to the thought that God is beyond all definition, perhaps unknown, or 'unknowable.' But the word 'Father' saves one from all this. Utter that word in all reverence and humility, realise what it means to be a child of God, and God will always mean something personal to you. It is not necessary to enlarge

this thought to include all that you mean when you conceive of God as the creator of this great universe. It is the personal, the individual relation that is now in question. Do not hesitate, then, to address the Father as if for the moment He were the God of your own heart alone, within your most intimate life and thought. Unless the Father is thus personal for you, unless you find Him when you worship at the altar of your own heart, you are not likely to see Him in the lives of your fellows or in the operations of Nature.

It is this relationship which Jesus most fully dwells upon in the Sermon on the Mount. The Father is revealed within the sacred precincts of the soul. All needs have been provided for, and true prayer discovers them. The Father is just, impartial, knows the needs of each of us, knows what befalls us, and rewards each man according to his works. Hence the Father is not only the source of all goodness, and of all guidance, but is in a profound sense the Friend, the sustaining Presence which each soul appre-

hends in a direct and individual way. The Fatherhood of God implies the individuality of man. There is nothing higher, no guidance that is more direct, ultimate, conclusive, than that which comes to the soul in the supreme moments of receptivity, of willingness to seek the Father's way, and to walk in that way.

The first consideration is the universal Fatherhood, the supreme fact, the upward look, in readiness and consecration of spirit. Then follows the recognition of what the great fact means. Taken in the largest sense of the word, the conception of the Fatherhood of God means that God is the original source of the existence of all beings and things, that all our life, power, and intelligence came primarily from Him. Hence the primacy of the divine Fatherhood is the first principle of our real life. To understand this fundamental principle is to see that all men are members one of another in a purposive kingdom of ends. We are here to manifest the Father's will, fulfil His all-inclusive purpose.

But the Father is not alone the original

source of our being. He is also the immediate source of our life and power day by day, and week by week. He is immanent, ever-present, in intimate relation with the soul. The divine spirit not only went forth in creative activity long ago, but is resident in all that is carrying humanity forward to-day. Hence it is amidst the activities of daily life that the presence of God is to be realised.

If it is literally true that there is one Father of all, then all men are without exception sons of God. The recognition of divine Fatherhood is necessarily the recognition of divine sonship. If the Father has made provision for each and all of us so that no hardship shall befall us which cannot be mastered, no temptation which we cannot conquer, then surely there is a part of our life that is for ever divine. Hence the command, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' is to be taken in entire seriousness. Divine sonship is open to all. There is no moment in the life of any of us when the Father's presence cannot be found.

There is literally no barrier which separates us from the Father. God is not merely omnipresent—He is the very power, reality, which makes our existence possible within His presence. On the Godward side, man must always be looked upon as a son, hence as pure, true spirit.

Yet it is still true that it is those who live by the spirit of God who are worthy to be called sons of God; 'all things work together for good for those who love the Lord.' There are certain conditions to be observed on man's part, otherwise the Fatherhood of God means nothing to him. What is God as Father? Above all He is love, wise—impartial, universal love. He is made known to the individual soul as the Holy Spirit; it is the Spirit which unites Father and son. Therefore to be a son of God in very truth is to manifest the divine love and wisdom, to walk by the Spirit. The grace of God is conferred when the Spirit speaketh. The Spirit speaks in accents of peace. It soothes the troubled soul, even as a father pitieth his children.

It is the comforter which leadeth into all truth.

The very fact, then, that one approaches God with the great word, 'Father,' implies that one has overcome the sense of separateness which ordinarily sunders man from God, that one is ready to give up one's own way, and ask in deepest humility, 'What wilt thou have me do?' For it is in our dependence, in our extremity that we cry out unto the Father, with a confession that our own way has failed, and we know not whither to turn. Hence it is still from the Father's side that the decisive power comes. The Father so loves His children that He descends in the form of the Holy Spirit. The whole meaning of the incarnation is involved in this coming of the Spirit to waken man out of his forgetfulness.

CHAPTER XV

A LAW OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

THERE are two modes in which men ordinarily pass through life. There are people who move along, from day to day, about as they have always lived, or as others live around them. They sometimes raise questions; they wonder, are fearful, distressed or are victims of conflicting emotions. But they do not think, do not pursue their questions, hence they possess only the resources which circumstances make known. But there are other people who seek to know the law of human living. They do not simply pass from experience to experience, swept on by the great currents of physical and social life. They put experience with experience and reflect. Out of such thinking springs the knowledge which is 'power.'

One of the most profitable results of such thinking is the explanation of the transition stage through which we all pass in our mental and spiritual evolution. A time comes in our growth when the enthusiasm and faith of childhood are gone. Problems and doubts arise. Conflicts and inner struggles ensue. For the time all the way seems dark and uncertain. To those who do not seek the law of experience there seems to be no resource but to return to the period of unquestioning faith. 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' If one can only cease to question, one can be happy again—so it seems. There is much lamentation over the loss of the freshness and spontaneity of the first period of life. Hence the cry goes up, Return to nature! Back to the simplicity of faith!

Is any such return possible? The experience of men shows us that there is not. It is not a question of return, but of advance. As matter of fact, there are three periods through which we pass in all our growth.

There is first the period of nature, childhood, of first experiences, first thoughts, first loves. Under this head belong all original instincts promptings, stirrings, conversions, and the like. This is the period when we take in power, when we are quickened into action. Then ensues a stage when we begin to assimilate the power. We go forth filled with enthusiasm, eager to convert the world, expecting soon to become perfect ourselves. But we forthwith meet opposition, the unregeneracy of human nature, and the new life wrestles with the old. Then doubts arise, darkness follows, and we think we have lost our hold. This is the stage which so many are in, in these transition days. It is the period of self-consciousness, of endeavour to attain, of discipline, training, the effort to acquire self-control. Uncertain whither they are tending, unable to return to the untroubled stage of mere acceptance of belief, people often become agnostics in this period. But there is a third period which men enter when the new life has become part of them, when

the skies once more clear, and the law of evolution is seen.

The intermediate period is a long, long one for most of us. But the whole process of growth is put in a different light when we grasp the law. To see the meaning, the outcome, is to be content to pass through the means necessary to attain the end. Every time we aspire, each time we pray, we set out upon this threefold sequence. Every new theory we consider, every art, science, or occupation we take up, we pass through the same round. There is first the desire, the will, the ideal; then the self-conscious endeavour, the analysis, testing, searching, experimenting; but finally the new habit is established. To arrive at the third stage is to begin to know, to be able to do our work well, to acquire inner repose, ease, equanimity. It is also to see that nothing has been lost, that the self-conscious period was a stage of growth, not of degeneration (as we once thought). And so there is a recovery of spontaneity, enthusiasm, faith. But it is

now spontaneity of a higher sort, the calm enthusiasm of wisdom, the faith which can give reasons.

The same series is passed through every time a new truth is uttered. A wise writer once said of his book that if it called out opposition he should know there was something in it. Every sound idea must be tried, tested, must undergo controversy. Each time we have a new insight into the spiritual ideal and resolve to be faithful we are tested anew. Hence even the Christ meets temptation. But when we see the law we are no longer surprised that the temptation comes.

It is sometimes said that the period of innocence is the desirable stage of human life. Jesus assures us that unless we become as little children we shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven. But He does not add, Ye must remain little children. The majority of men agree that it is natural and right for every son of God to go forth into the world of experience. We do not know that we are sons of God when we first

go forth. It is contrast, conflict, duality that shows us the law. A time comes when we see that there are two selves within us, the one divine, the other human. While we hold them side by side there seems to be no solution for our problems and conflicts. But in due course we discern the meaning of that other saying of Jesus, 'He that loseth his life shall find it.' To understand this law is to enter the third stage. The gradually attained results of the second period are now turned to account. There is no power in human life which the Spirit cannot use. The more intellectual training we have the better, the more knowledge we possess the more efficient we can become—if only all that we have and all that we are is dedicated to the service of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XVI

WISDOM

Much has been said and written about the superiority of intuition, the primacy of experience as directly perceived. It is well to emphasise the value of first-hand experience in contrast with theoretical interpretations of it. There is every reason in favour of the cultivation of the receptivity essential to such experience. The preservation of spontaneity is one of the great needs of life. There is nought to say against this ideal. All reality is, in a sense, primarily immediate, and nothing can take the place of direct, personal acquaintance with the great realities of life.

Yet there is another ideal. As valuable as first-hand experience may be, there is additional worth in reconsidered experience. This statement is true even of the most

exalted spiritual visions. Experiences which stir us deeply are often too absorbing to be rightly estimated at the time. A subtle illusion pervades our noblest emotions. When we report our visions we are apt to read too much into them, if we simply try to describe them in their original form. Hence the excesses of mysticism and pantheism. Hence the over-confidence of much popular optimism.

It is often tacitly assumed that because an experience was original, first-hand, an affair of feeling, therefore it was entirely true, precisely as it came. It is also assumed that a person cannot be deceived who has once dedicated himself to intuition. The fact that a statement is made on the authority of intuition is often taken to mean that it is infallible. Now, I do not wish to cast the least suspicion upon those who are deeply in earnest to discover and to voice intuition. No doubt intuition is, ideally speaking, practically infallible. In general, to be guided by intuition is to follow the highest, purest guidance that ever comes to man. It is not our most conscious

reasoning processes that give us our loftiest truths, but our quick insights, our spiritual discernment. Yet to compare the utterances of varied types of people who refer to intuition as their authority is to learn that there are grades and degrees of success in the discovery and expression of intuition; hence that infallibility is still an ideal. No doubt the original prompting is profoundly true and genuine. But one is not always in a mood either to discern or to report it correctly. The assumption that I am here analysing, is the claim that impressionism is the truest form of expression of immediate experience. The mere impression may be relatively superficial. The deep truth implied in the experience is rather to be discovered by sober second thought. The new first thought may be unduly coloured by merely personal enthusiasm, emotion and inclination. But genuine guidance is disinterested. It is more apt to speak through our calmer moments. Hence a higher ideal stands out before us, the ideal of Wisdom.

By this term I do not mean what is called 'mere intellect.' Nor do I mean cold criticism, but deep, moderate, comprehensive, and above all, appreciative thought; thought that has been enriched by experience. Hence Wisdom grows, not out of mere theorising, but out of life. It is a peculiar and altogether wonderful combination of reason and the spirit.

Sometimes when one sits quietly observing a company of people who are talking about the more serious concerns of life, one notices a striking difference between the speakers. Some have a ready flow of thoughts, and seem able to carry everything before them, on account of their command of facts and ideas. But there are others who say little, in a quiet, incidental way, usually in the lulls when the more eloquent people are pausing for breath. The utterances of these thoughtful observers who sit on the outskirts of the blare and bluster of life are not heralded by claims of any sort, and they are sometimes almost drowned by the general din. Yet it is these utterances that appeal to and abide

with us. Perhaps you and I have met scarcely half a dozen men and women whom we have set down as 'wise.' But our ideal is to be like these few. All else is mere pretension in comparison. In our heart of hearts we feel that a man really knows when he has *lived*. Whatever his inspiration may have been, the confirmation which experience gives is far greater. The wise man's intuitions have met the test of everything that can be brought to bear against them. Hence they bear the power of authority. Hence they inspire confidence.

Our Divine Father is often spoken of as essentially 'Love.' Here, again, one can take away nothing. But Swedenborg speaks of the Lord as 'the Divine Love and Wisdom.' One sees that Swedenborg is right. Without perfect Wisdom there cannot be perfect Love. The Divine Love is never 'blind'; it is light, and it illumines. We need only renew our ideal of the all-wise Father in order to correct the misapprehensions which I am here analysing.

The proposition may be laid down that, for us mortals, nothing can be adequately, truly known until it is calmly reconsidered. No experience, no proposition, is absolutely true as it stands, alone, but must be put with its complement. To compare and discover the richer meaning of our deepening insights and experiences, is to pass to a higher form of experience than mere first-handedness, whether it be intellectual or spiritual.

Many people mistakenly suppose that there is no alternative between the immediate experience or discernment, on the one hand, and what they condemn as mere intellect on the other. But there are several alternatives. Illumined reason is decidedly superior to the sort of intuition that is ordinarily popular. Those who pass from experience to experience, from prophet to prophet, and from teaching to teaching, without discovering by comparison what is wise in each, miss the deeper meaning not only of life, but of the spirit itself. In this connection comparisons are not 'odious,' but are the only sure guides to

what is permanently true. To follow prophet after prophet simply because one 'feels' that his teaching is true, is to pursue surfaces, not realities. In the long-run, mere feeling is a less safe guide than mere intellect; the genuinely trustworthy guide is Wisdom.

Such being the ideal, how is it to be realised? In the first place, Wisdom differs in a marked respect from most of the treasures of life; it absolutely cannot be imitated, put on, or counterfeited. A man who is gifted with a ready tongue, or who sweeps people before him with his eloquence, his exuberance of feeling or his dominating personality, may seem to be what he is not. Half the learned people in the world are accredited with the possession of what they have not. Half the 'spiritual' people are supposed to be what they are not. But no man can pass himself off as wise. Hence Wisdom is not to be won at a leap, it cannot be attained by affirmation. One may, indeed, pray fervently for, and receive guidance. But guidance is not yet Wisdom. Wisdom is not in any sense a gift.

We may, however, prepare for its coming. The few men we have met who were really wise have taught us how to begin. For they sat there amidst the praters and devotees of mere feeling, in a calm, dispassionate attitude. What they uttered was spoken quietly, even conservatively, with no desire to be impressive. They were men of composure, poised, moderate, abounding in an admirably gentle humility. Such composure is an affair of slow growth; such poise is the result of many a victory. The moderation is not put on for the occasion, but is habitual; it comes after passion has subsided. The humility is a crowning characteristic of genuine knowledge.

Need a man wait until he is grey-haired ere he can be wise? Not at all. Wisdom begins with the beginnings of self-control, equanimity, verification, and, above all, with the dawning of reason. It begins with insight, and by this term I mean a higher function than what is popularly known as intuition. For insight is possible only when one possesses not merely intuition, but knowledge

of laws and principles by which to discern the meaning of things. Wisdom takes account of the actual facts of life, does not shut its eyes to anything. As compared with what usually passes current as optimism and pessimism, it is bent on knowing the *truth* of things. Wisdom is strong in faith, hope, and cheer, despite the facts which would overthrow the faith of the typical optimist. Wisdom quietly observes events and people, then as quietly arrives at reasoned conclusions, based on discernment of their profound significance. The wisdom of things is their law, their profoundest affinity and love.

The ideal of Wisdom, then, is illumined reason. And the moral is easily seen. Hold your experiences in solution. Let your intuitions season. Take your prophets under observation. Permit your emotions to cool. Be no less spontaneous, meanwhile. Give forth your first impressions. Do not quench the spirit. But do not too highly estimate your 'wonderful experiences.' Do not fall into the delusion which besets the people who

make a hobby of spirituality, namely, the notion that they are a little better than other folks, that whatever they happen to utter is so sacred in the first form in which it comes that no one may tamper with it. The scholar who is condemned as merely 'intellectual' sets a better example. The master of a branch of learning already knows enough to discern how little he knows. Hence, he is humble, and humility is a large part of Wisdom.

CHAPTER XVII

HARMONY

THE most impressive fact in the great universe around us is undoubtedly the perpetual march of events, the continuous change or flux which characterises all the activities of men and things. Life never abruptly begins, it never suddenly ends, it never wholly pauses. Something is ever in motion, something is being accomplished. There is a forward march, not of great masses, but of minute parts and particles. The seasons come and go with apparent rapidity, yet the transitions are gradual. All vegetation maintains an unbroken mutation. History is making day by day, political parties are changing, society is adopting new customs. Men come and go. All forms are altering, new forms are appearing, and thus, ever forward, without

rest, without exact repetition, with perennial novelties and unceasing delights, the huge world organism pulsates away from the past to the future, from yesterday to to-day, and from to-day to to-morrow.

If we look into the inner world, we discover the same tireless flux, the same surprising mutation. Our consciousness never pauses, it never rests; it is always interested, it is always presenting a new moment of being. Our words and ideas abide for a season, then depart to give place to new states of consciousness. Some states of mind linger, it is true, but only through continued renewing, never by the persistence of precisely similar consciousness, for consciousness is a stream, it is a part of the great pulsating life. It acquaints us with the ceaseless change of the outside world, and keeps pace with it. It ever lives with a life peculiarly its own.

If we ask what is the ultimate basis, the fundamental significance of this great flux within us and around us, it at once becomes clear that behind, beyond, and yet within the

perpetual march must be a perpetual Presence to maintain it. Every pulsation is in a sense a fresh creation, a new revelation of God, for the divine life is manifested by the little things, the infinitesimal changes, the gradual attainments, the tireless upwelling of life in the world of nature, and the world of thought. Not a moment could exist without that Presence. Not a moment could anything endure unless it were carried forward to new life by the same Power that once brought it forth. The perpetual flux is made perpetual; things are ever in motion just because the outgoing activity of the one Power is perpetual. Furthermore, since the entire march of events is a unit, one great organism carried forward by a perpetual Achiever, this continual becoming is governed by a central ideal. God is steadily accomplishing through the life of the great organism the one great purpose which called it into being. Every moment of our lives, every thought, every sensation, is a part of this one creative movement. All things are in process of becoming,

all consciousness is a becoming. Consequently the meaning, the real significance of the march of things and men, is the progressive realisation of the divine, the perfect ideal. This being the great fact of life, the eternally forward movement toward the great goal of harmony, the question is, what shall be man's attitude toward this progressive flux irresistibly bearing him onward, both bodily and mentally?

The history of philosophy and religion is the record of the attitudes assumed by man in relation to this great upwelling, for in some form man is ever conscious of its presence, and his opinion of it has always taken embodiment in some attitude. If ignorant of its ultimate unity, he has regarded it as a twofold force—good and evil. If imbued with a sense of its spirit, he has often identified nature and God, and even worshipped himself as a part of the great pantheistic whole. Some have regarded it as the worst world-order possible, and so have become pessimists. Some have become so optimistic that they

were of no use to society, since they believed that all *must* come out well, whatever course might be pursued. But by far the larger number have assumed a sort of rebellious attitude: consequently, the perpetual flux, instead of producing harmony, has produced discord. Yet if all things work together for harmony, carried forward by the perpetual Presence, the forces manifested in pain and evil are a part of the same harmonious system. Ultimately, I say, they must be making for harmony, but in man these forces produce discord. We must then look to man as the prime cause of his trouble.

In the first place, man is still unfinished. As some one has said: 'He is still in the workshop of God.' He has undeveloped sides. All who suffer, and are not sound and strong, are in a measure unfinished. They are on the road. The creative power, ever present with them, is at work upon them, seeking to perfect the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual organisms. It is constantly stirring within. It is perpetually upwelling. But

if this process is misunderstood, it is resisted, it is taken to be some hostile force or disease attacking the organism from outside. The first point, therefore, in the search for harmony, is the proper understanding. We must know what the perpetual march means. We must think, first of all, of the outcome, concentrating upon the divine ideal. We must transmute the force once spent in resisting this upwelling force into co-operation with it. Thus recognition and co-operation are the two words which, above all others, suggest the wise attitude toward the beneficent Power which, when misunderstood, was deemed a hostile power.

The attainment of the right attitude of adjustment to the divine creative power welling up within us, means far more, however, than appears at first thought. The law of the universe is variety. The world is many-sided, complex. Man, as an epitome of creation, bears within him all these manifold relations. He is not simply a mind, or a body, a soul, an intellect; an artist, poet, a

moral being, or a social individual. He is all of these, and much more. He is primarily a soul, possessing a perpetually evolving consciousness, a spiritual nature, a moral sense, an intellect, a social instinct, a body, and many avenues of expression. He must, then, come to consciousness of himself first of all as a soul, then in these many directions awake to knowledge of his possibilities, and begin the great work of many-sided development. For the creative power is at work upon him from all these sides—it is seeking to make him a rounded-out character, a fully-developed soul, a perfect being—physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. This is so, because the creative power is manifold and varied in its manifestation. It is not simple, but complex; not poor, but wealthy.

Harmony is the great ideal, it is because it is so hard to attain, because it must become universal; its constituents are like the bits of a great mosaic, slowly fitted together to form a transcendently beautiful picture. Each creature that lives must attain harmony;

each man must come to consciousness of what harmony means, so that his pain shall cease, and he shall become a loving, helpful member of the great republic of God, and each man must come to consciousness in all these many directions.

We have all attained harmony in some respects, but we are still imperfect, and must therefore consider wherein we are still resisting the divine power; what it is in us that keeps us in discord.

It is a great temptation when one has adopted a certain profession, accepted a religious creed or philosophical doctrine, to make a hobby of one's chosen occupation or theory of life, and so prepare the way for future one-sidedness. This danger is one which every seeker after harmony has to consider. Even when it is the spiritual life which one has chosen, the tendency oftentimes is to cultivate the spirit at the expense of other sides of one's nature, and to the neglect of the body. The business man becomes merely the business man, the recluse neglects

society, the society man has no time for solitude, the scientific man crushes out the spirit, and the religious man is unscientific.

Others have placed too great stress upon the inner world, and so have lost many of the beauties of the world of nature. Some have actually believed that thought creates all the qualities of matter, as though human thought, instead of divine wisdom, were the source of the manifold beauties of the perpetual flux of things.

A nobler philosophy shows us that every phase of this perpetual becoming in the natural world possesses a glory, a beauty of its own; it is an expression of the divine harmony. It exists in and by itself, independent of man's thought. It would be there even though there were no minds to think about it.

To be sure, no two people are affected exactly alike by natural phenomena, no two feel the same sensations, no two have the same tastes; but the difference is in them. Nature possesses universal qualities which all

would feel alike if all were organised alike. She possesses qualities of harmony, of beauty, which it should be the desire of every man to apprehend. Adjustment is the ideal—adjustment to the qualities of existence as God has constituted it to be. We are to ask, What wilt Thou have it to be? What is the divine command, the divine tendency?

This is the true Christ law, the universal Christ spirit, which, instead of imposing itself upon the universe, first asks what the universe is. We are to ask then, first, What *is*, what is the real, the divine *quality*; then ask, What *ought* to be, what is the divine *tendency*? In this way we lift our science and our thought to the divine level. We begin to realise in life and in thought the harmony of the universe. And is it not wise and right that one should seek harmony in matters of food and dress, as well as in one's general surroundings, in one's companionships, books, and states of mind? Surely no detail is too trivial to deserve neglect. All things are a part of the great perpetual march, and all things

may be lifted to the level of the perpetual Presence.

I mean that we should make all these things a study, that we shall cultivate our voices, develop our bodies, train our intellect, and seek harmony in every detail of daily existence. And all this can be done without in any way departing from the ideals of the Spirit, for it is all to be accomplished through the Spirit by means of the forces set in motion by thought; that is, we are to put the higher thought into whatever we do. We are to exercise our bodies with the consciousness of the divine power we are using. We are to develop in all these directions as instruments in the great creative work.

And so we return each time to the central thought. There is a perpetual march of events, a constant forward movement of the life which pulsates in and around us, and an ever active, conscious stream within. Back of all this great movement there is a perpetual Presence, a Power that makes for harmony. It is our part to study the tendencies of that

Presence as it is revealed in the perpetual march, and harmonise with it, co-operate, listen for its guidance, declare its presence to mankind, and so by making our instruments more and more beautiful, give fuller and fuller manifestation to its spirit, its love, and its peace.

CHAPTER XVIII

THOUGHTS

'CEASE to judge, if you would not be judged.'

It is an epoch-making discovery in human life when man learns that the utmost which any doctrine or teacher can do for him is to put him in command of his own resources. To discover that the highest resources are directly open to the individual is to begin at last to be poised. Until this fact is learned, people restlessly cast about for that which can only be found within.

It is a false inference that a belief is true simply because a loved one holds it. One should be able to separate persons from beliefs.

Adverse physical conditions begin to

assume new aspects as soon as we see the spiritual meaning of our experience in relation to them.

Some say that guidance is to do the will of another. But suppose the other's will is selfish, does the principle hold? One may be temperamentally inclined to yield too much. In this case one should learn rather to be strong in the presence of others. The advice is good, however, for people of a managerial type.

There is oftentimes much behind when people insist that one person or one doctrine is 'just as good as another.' This proposition may mean that the maker of it is unwilling to acknowledge that another man is wiser than himself. People of genuine spiritual attainment are not concerned to reduce all mankind to a dead level.

Very many times that which people endeavour to prove is what they will to prove, not that which is reasonably true.

Our first impressions may be correct, but we do not know that they are true until

experience has confirmed them. Hence it is well to accept them with reservations.

Many a reputed genius owes his fame to the fact that a large part of his sentences are obscure. Admirers labour over him and deem him great because his meaning is hard to find. Had he really been great he would have been able to tell what he meant.

Whatever is here was possible. Let us then concern ourselves with the effort to understand it. The mere question of possibility is of slight moment.

It is supposed to be an argument against philosophy that philosophers change their minds. But it is only the mediocre mind which commits itself to opinion instead of to reason, and reason is progressive.

We do not yet know the whole truth. What we are doing for the most part is moving along from moment to moment, stating the case as it appeals to us at the time, then passing on, ever in pursuit. To-day's statement is quickly outgrown.

If every individual is a member of a whole

constituted of mutually dependent members, the true understanding either of the individual or of society is in the light of this mutual dependence.

One who is unaware of his dependence is ignorant of the real conditions of existence.

Why assume that there is but one end towards which all things tend? Why not several high ends?

We are learning by experience what the world is, what we are, what others are. Experience is not yet complete. Complete experience can alone show what a thing completely is, what experience itself really is.

To know a man you must know (1) whom he loves, that is, the type of persons; (2) how he expresses his love, what love is to him; (3) his attitude and experience with respect to his sex nature; (4) the type of his affection for, and his treatment of, women.

One of the most important changes in human thought and conduct may be com-

pared to the growth in astronomy from the Ptolemaic system to the Copernican—the change from a local centre to the universal. This law of growth is illustrated throughout human history, in every department of human thought, both individual and racial. It is, in a word, the discovery of other people besides ourselves, a discovery of such moment that we must make it many times before we realise its true significance.

In government, the change is from tyranny, aristocracy, monarchy, and other autocratic schemes to democracy—the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It is also the enlargement of petty states into a united whole. It is first the federation of tribes and towns, then the federation of races. At the outset it may lead to war, but it forthwith brings peace. In due course it will be the federation of allied nations, then the federation and co-operation of the world.

In the family it marks the end of paternal despotism. It is the emancipation of woman, the granting of individuality to children,

the reign of love as opposed to the rule of authority.

In the business world it is co-operation, the working together of allied interests, where once destructive competition reigned.

When religion shakes off ecclesiastical authority and recognises the right of private judgment, it enters the same large world. In ethics it is the change from egoism to barbarism. In fact, the moral life begins with the shifting of the centre from self to humanity.

In philosophy it is the casting off of subjectivism. In psychology it is the recognition of the social self, and the dependence of the soul upon its larger environment. Even our crude, present-day psychology is an attempt in this direction.

Next to the problem of evil, the most serious objection that is raised when one insists that the universe is a divine order is the argument from inequality, injustice, the existence of unsolved social problems. How is it possible, the critic demands, that

what you say is true, when social ills are so far from mending? If the divine guidance be omnipresent, all-loving, why are so many millions of people deprived of freedom, opportunity, and happiness? Is not this the very essence of the problem of evil?

To talk about spiritual poise and faith does indeed seem absurd in the face of such unequal conditions. But there are many facts and principles to consider before one is in a position to understand these conditions.

The real basis of life is spiritual. Man is a soul dwelling in eternity. The real self is unseen, and the highest end for which it exists is spiritual. Ideas stand before things. Character is above possessions. It is what we make out of life that avails. The circumstance is always secondary. It is perspective that reveals reality. Perspective shows that there is compensation, justice, love, where there seemed to be unmitigated hardship, cruel injustice, and hatred. Oppressor and oppressed are both in the process of spiritual evolution. This we must see clearly, or all

will be darkness. Everything depends on what we agree that life is for. If life were primarily for the flesh, there would indeed be reason to complain. Since it is for the soul, there are sure to be mysteries for us as long as we try to square all things by the standards of the flesh.

The common contention of socialistic and many other critics of spiritual idealism, is that social change is impossible while the present economic order exists. But this is materialism. Materialism puts things before ideas. It rearranges things, changes circumstance, in order that other ideas may prevail. From such a point of view man is not a soul, he is an economic tool. If this were true, not even God Himself could relieve man until capitalism had removed its terrible clutch.

We must discover what principles are fundamentally implied in each instance. We shall be involved in hopeless duality unless we view all things from within. The real principle of growth is by change from within.

In nature, progress does not begin in external arrangement, although external environment is a factor, but in inner quickening.

All life begins at a point, in the cell or seed, and works outward by cell division and organic multiplication. External accident may mar this growth, and a favourable environment is a necessary factor. But to bring about modifications and perpetuate them, it is necessary to begin at the centre of things. The same law is exemplified in the mental world. It is a thought of Emma Goldman which works in the mind of Czolgosz until it brings its terrible fruition, the killing of President M'Kinley. To reform that man or any other, you must somehow instil another idea into his mind. It would be useless to try to reform him by any other method. Your reformative idea is a carefully chosen product of your own mental evolution, it is the concentrated result of a vast deal of thinking. It will take root and grow like a seed in the soil.

Nature everywhere teaches this law of

centralisation amidst co-operation. The forces of the plant are concentrated in the seed which expands and grows from within. The cell is a miniature animal, and the fully developed individual is a complex result of a comparatively simple cell-process. The seed or cell is of little value by itself. Environment is little more than ornamental without a seed. But combined with an environment the seed is a mighty power. In man, the most highly centralised product is the leader in the body politic or physical state. The brain must be fed, yet all the life of the body is dependent on the brain as the governmental centre.

Not co-operation alone, nor centralisation, but co-operation through centralisation—this is nature's method. There must be a head to everything, but the head cannot stand alone. True harmony is attained when the head and the members work together. A strike among the members would be as absurd as a strike among heads. True understanding and adjustment among heads

comes slowly because of the many-sided wealth of their organic parts. Such harmony is the result of gradual evolution. Inequality is long a characteristic of this evolution.

It is a fond saying that men were created or born 'free and equal,' but as we look abroad over the world we see that the facts belie the words. Man was born in inequality, reared in inequality, and inequality characterises the entire human race to-day. Inequality must then be one of the conditions of evolution, and we must seek the reasons for it by a closer study of evolution and human life. True social regeneration must take this factor into account. The more intelligent socialists frankly admit that what they want is equality of opportunity, not equality of material surroundings. But they are apt to stop here, instead of inquiring into the reasons for inequality. It is clear that what many of them want is an external readjustment on the basis of material equality.

If 'created free and equal' means anything, it must refer to spiritual equality. If it be

a question of equality before the law, or of freedom of opportunity, we are surely far from that, and must understand what we mean by these phrases before we can dedicate ourselves unqualifiedly to them. Whatever the theory, fact is better than fancy. If social equality be the ideal, let us understand existing conditions of inequality, that we may learn how things are tending on the evolutionary road.

The reasons for inequality become apparent when, starting with the universal cause, ignorance, we trace out the long series of factors—inheritance, servitude, aristocracy, competition, grasping corporations, the rule of the strong, the wealthy and the corrupt. But possibly the entire point of view is wrong. There may be deep meaning in human inequality. It may not be wise that all men should enjoy equality, if by that term we mean what is ordinarily understood.

The earth is the home of all people. It belongs to all, not to the few. There is no doubt of that. Nor is there the slightest

doubt that many men are temporarily exercising far too much power. There are thousands of unjust conditions which must gradually be changed. But is it probable that any degree of change would alter the conditions of our profoundest relationship with one another and with God?

Diversity of gifts implies diversity of mental and physical conditions. I may be suffering under circumstances which would demand perpetual outcry against God and society—if regarded from the point of view of the radical socialist. If these conditions enable me to do my work, what care I that I am deprived of a hundred advantages which pitying observers insist that I should enjoy? The materially adverse may be the spiritually favourable. The crucial question is, Have we come to judgment so that we know our true place? If so, the chances are that we shall sing the praises of the divine order. If not, we are likely to be perpetually disgruntled. There is a world-wide difference between the two attitudes.

If the whole point of view of conventional belief in equality be wrong, the true statement is more probably somewhat as follows. Human society is an organism. One man is a poet, another an artisan. One is a scholar, another is a statesman. To one is given the privilege of quietly serving in an apparently menial relation. This man's virtues are not heralded abroad. Very few appreciate his services. To another is granted utmost publicity. Every one knows about his brilliant career as a government official, a general, or admiral. But few know the price he has to pay for popularity, few know how his virtues are enlarged upon and his vices minimised. In the final reckoning the humble servant may occupy as high a seat, possibly a higher one, while the world will say, How fortunate was this great official!

Here then is a crucial question. The crucial question therefore is, What is man? Why are we here? What is most worth while? Shall we deal with man as a material being, or as a soul? What kind of wealth shall we strive for?

Study the lives of a hundred different men and you will find a hundred different kinds of inequality. Each man has had a different experience. Each man has a different ambition. On what basis are you going to organise those men—on the basis of a merely levelling social reform, brought about from the outside, or from the point of view of the divine government, wherein each may be fitted to do a certain work, capitalist and labourer, thinker and artisan, working together as members of a social organism? And by what method do you propose to bring about the equalisation, by the anarchism of merely human endeavour, or by the orderly process whereby nature builds for the ages?

These are questions as serious as they are profound, and upon the answer to them depends the choice between the socialism of danger and the socialism of safety. Very few socialists would pursue the anarchistic course if they faced these issues; the trouble is that their analysis stops short of the discovery that nature has already revealed the true

way. But now that anarchism is in greater disrepute we may look for a closer banding together of the socialists, many of whom will doubtless look upon their body as a persecuted sect. Some will probably condemn the present social order more strenuously than ever. But to all who realise that socialism stands at the parting of the ways there is offered an opportunity to guard against the dangers outlined above. To all such we say: 'Come, let us reason together.' Let us now sound this social discontent, on the one hand, to see how far it is healthy; and even more persistently analyse the conditions and causes of inequality.

There are many obscure problems closely related to the latter inquiry. But the main issues call for the most searching thought, namely, the questions: Who and what are we? What sort of equality do we want? Shall we be the agents of materialism, or the servants of that higher ideal which values character above ducats and the products of the brain above those of the hand?

When we consider these problems, it is well to remember that human evolution is not complete yet. We are just entering the social era, and there are ages of growth ahead of us. Almost without exception, those who are troubled over the social problem take a short-sighted view. They are either absorbed in the study of evil and so cannot see the good, they either lack insight into the divine order, or they have some plan of social reform to advocate which they insist shall be put into effect at once. Almost invariably the plan of reform involves the readjusting of the social mass from the outside. It is no wonder that the devotees of such schemes are repeatedly disappointed.

The moral order is not founded on the petty judgments of men. The gods know the entire story and judge accordingly. Nor is the moral order limited to our time world. It is eternal, and there are abundant opportunities for readjustment. He who adopts the eternal point of view must part company with the standards of conventional society and the

daily press. If society is really a community of immortal souls, no point of view is sound save that which beholds life as a whole. If the eternal republic of souls is ideally an organism, the first need is to acquaint men with that fact. Then we will see what else is needed.

Membership in an organism implies that each soul has a function to fulfil, and functional activity implies limitation. Whether or not limitation be a ground of complaint depends upon how fully one understands the function. When a general ceases to try for the position of orator, when the admiral sticks to his ship, and the labourer no longer aspires to be a poet, the entire universe takes on a new complexion.

There is a vast difference between aspirations which are grounded on ability, and envy which is founded on air. If your ambition be in keeping with your constitution, nothing in the wide world can keep you from its realisation. If it be out of relation to your soul, no power under heaven can fulfil your desires.

Such is the divine order, and when you have once understood the law, all these questions of inequality are settled for all time.

Since inequality of talent is natural and to some degree probably insurmountable, our revised universal proposition would seem to be this: every man and every nation shall enjoy the liberty of individuality, and the privileges granted shall be limited only by the limitations of talent. A nation shall be free to govern itself or to worship as it chooses, and no foreign nation shall have the right to seize its land, enslave or rule its people, or in any way interfere with the free expression of national genius. If the nation's political system, art, science, religion, or social conduct falls below the standard of another so-called superior nation, so be it. No nation knows its needs so well as the nation in question. No foreign nation should assume the right of judgment or of dictation. God dwells there also. In due time He will declare Himself as befits this particular

nation's genius. Just as individuality is encouraged under the college elective system, so individuality should be stimulated and encouraged in nations—individuality in dress, art, architecture, language, customs, and religion. Any nation which, by warfare or any other means, interferes with this national freedom is to that extent not only unethical but irreligious.

That this is not the prevailing social ideal is evident from the grasping activities of imperialism, instigated by belief in the superiority of certain nations. The question is, How shall we persuade the nations to adopt the social policy of 'Live and let live?'

As all reform begins with man, and not with men, the first essential is individual thought. It is easy to convince individuals that they should reverence and manifest individuality. This idea appeals to them. It pleases them to be told that they possess superior talents. But usually they fail to see that they can be truly free only so far as they confer freedom.

The vital problem is, How shall we persuade the individual to become a social factor, an agent for the grand ideal of social freedom, the attainment of which means not only the emancipation of one's environing society, but also national freedom?

The natural history of the individual is so nearly typical of the natural history of society that, having attained a measure of freedom, one may very well study one's experience to learn its laws, then apply these to mankind at large. Individual liberty begins when man begins to think, when he discovers ideal freedom. Without antagonism, therefore, begin to conduct yourself among men, and so express yourself as to stimulate freedom of thought. Let your educational work be calculated primarily to encourage individual thinking. The habit once founded, you may lead men on so skilfully that, before they are aware, they will become interested in those principles whose application means social freedom.

Do not chant the horrors of the wrongs to

be righted, but gradually arouse in men that higher sense which will lead them logically and spontaneously to the discovery of the social ideal. Inculcate tolerance by being tolerant yourself. Show your readiness to hear another's point of view. Avoid all sectarian feeling. Do not be limited by local organisations, but enlarge and become universal. Not 'My country, right or wrong,' should be your toast, but 'My country, one among many, which I serve only so far as it makes for liberty.'

The sentiment of superiority, doubtless, has much to do with the present social status. But the only truly superior person is one who manifests the Spirit. The superiority of physical force, of material wealth, and showy aristocracy, must give way before the superiority of love, brotherhood, and the fellowship of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XIX

PREJUDICE

THERE are few discoveries in regard to the human mind of more consequence than the revelation which shows the power of prejudice. Some might say that it is more important to become aware of the power of fear, or to awaken to the influence and scope of suggestion. But oftentimes a man's prejudices are far more deeply rooted than his fears, and to show him the power of suggestion you must show him that his life is narrowed by his preconceptions. One may be aware of fear and may be valiantly at work to overcome it, but the peculiarity of a prejudice is that one is unconscious of it. To discover that one is prejudiced is forthwith to see that in the respect in question one stands absolutely in one's own light.

Probably every one knows people whose prejudices are so deep-rooted that it is apparently futile to allude to any subject in which the prejudices are closely involved. One sees that something profound must touch these victims of their own beliefs, but that this something must come from another source. For usually the most prejudiced people we know are friends or members of our own household, and hence we are unable to utter the freeing word which a prophet from another household must sometime declare. To know that a person is profoundly prejudiced is to know the person in question rather better than an outsider could know him. To possess such knowledge is also to be able to say illuminating things. But how seldom is the opportunity granted. In many cases the only resource is to act as if the friend's prejudice did not exist, and this is no small accomplishment.

A typical case of extreme prejudice is that of the mother whose child is interested in some one of the opposite sex and who believes

that the person in question has a pernicious influence over her child. The assumption often is that all blame is to be cast upon the other; one's own child is spotless. Under such circumstances a mother can sometimes be cold, distant, one-sided, to the verge of heartlessness. But the onlooker knows that no social relationship of any sort ever exists without the causal participation of two or more parties. In the world of actual life people are not sharply divided into villains and angels. Your alleged villain is in many respects as good as you are. The fact that there is a tie of blood between you and your child, or between you and your brother or sister, is no guarantee that either partner to the relationship is any better than the first man you meet on the street.

Sometimes one has an opportunity to observe prejudices in the making. The writer once brought two persons together with the greatest expectations. On account of the community of interest between them he thought there would be great eagerness to

co-operate in a work in which he, too, was deeply concerned. But it happened that each saw in the other the trait of character in which the observer in question was most at fault. Consequently all that the one could see in the other was the other's glaring limitations. As a result, each took a violent prejudice against the other, a prejudice so violent that it is doubtful if anything that may ever occur in this life will serve to remove it. Each assumes—and never questions the assumption—that he knows perfectly what the other is. Each is mistaken. But no argument can remove a prejudice of that kind. Experience must do it.

Oddly enough, one can be on the best terms with people who do not care for each other in the least. Some persons have the most surprising facility for the discovery of the weakest side of people they meet. Having found another's weakness there seems to be nothing more to say or do. Even Emerson says that a man ceases to interest us when his limitations are seen. On the contrary,

we really begin to know people, we really discover reasons for helping and loving them, when we learn their limitations. One ought to be as free to admit that one's mother or one's brother is prejudiced as to attribute prejudice to a stranger. To discern the prejudice, and yet remain loyal to the ideal for which the loved one is striving, is indeed to show that one really loves. It is a false sense of loyalty which leads us to defend some people merely because they are near and dear, whatever their attitude may be.

Again, prejudice may relate to a man's beliefs. Here is my friend, for example, who is so bent in one direction that he is blind to the only consideration which would make it possible for him to understand his chosen belief. Every item that tends to confirm his belief he quickly seizes upon. His mind is so turned against those who do not agree with him that he is unable to see any truth in their position. Hence he tacitly assumes that in that respect they are wrong while he is entirely in the right. But this is once

more to be as narrow as the fond mother who deems her child perfect. No point of view is wholly true. No error is entirely false. Your favourite doctrine must be supplemented by a theory that is not a favourite with you or you will possess, not a philosophy, but a set of prejudices.

It is easy to apply epithets and to classify beliefs under the head of some opprobrious term. But to penetrate behind the epithet is to find that human nature is still the same the world over. I may think I have rightly pigeon-holed a man when I set him down as a 'materialist'—simply because he does not chance to hold my peculiar views—but the probability is that the other man is in possession of certain facts of which I am ignorant. It is seriously to be questioned whether there exists the person to whom we think we refer when we condemn another as 'atheist,' or 'infidel,' or 'materialist.'

How shall we become aware of our prejudices? A good way to begin is to adopt a few general principles which tend to under-

mine all prejudices. For example, it is indisputable that everybody is human, hence that every one has two natures in him. If that is the case, the chances are that alongside of either the virtue we admire or the vice we condemn there is an opposing principle at work. To begin to know a man is to learn how he stands with regard to this immemorial struggle. If we know his wrestlings with his lower nature the probabilities are that we will not condemn. If we have come to consciousness in regard to the same conflict within ourselves we are hardly in a position to cast the first stone at anybody, and prejudice is casting stones; it is assuming that I am a little better than you are. Now, to begin to understand oneself is unwittingly to deprive one's prejudices of their very life. Prejudice springs from ignorance. Begin to inform yourself and you will be humiliated fast enough.

The fact that one adopts a new faith is no guarantee that one has left prejudice behind. The violent partisan is always prejudiced, and

it is difficult to be even a follower of a cult, a disciple of a master, without being prejudiced, for instance, against those who do not agree with one's master. It seems to follow that the only way to be unprejudiced is to be a truth-seeker. But this is a hard saying, for truth is unpopular. People like partisans and dread the impartial critic. What would become of all the societies for which people are for ever working to raise money, if society in general were to become unprejudiced? The only stock in trade the majority of theorists possess is their peculiar set of prejudices, and of course their followers must stand by them. On the other hand, what a delight it is to be free to follow truth wherever it may lead, even though it involves the sundering of life-long intellectual ties! To be unprejudiced is to be free. Let any one who would discover his prejudices, then, embark on a voyage in quest of truth, bearing in mind the saying of a certain wise man, 'Every man I meet is my master in some respect, in that I learn of him.'

CHAPTER XX

WHAT IS THE HIGHER LIFE?

THE term 'higher' is so often understood to imply an invidious distinction, as if my way were better than yours, that it is necessary at the outset to define the word as here used. To insist that my ways are not your ways, would indeed be to raise a barrier between us. But to maintain that there is a higher point of view than that of physical sensation, and a higher mode of life than the life of the flesh, is to draw the distinction which in all ages has characterised devotees of the Spirit. It by no means follows that our natural life is condemned. Nor need the distinction involve a theory of the supernatural. The appeal is to the soul. Since man is far more than a creature of flesh and blood, it behooves him to live as a spiritual being should. There is a

way of living which subordinates the flesh to the spirit. There is another way of thinking which puts matter first. All through the ages there have been those who tried to explain the higher, nobler nature of man by the lower. All through the ages there have been others who have insisted that the darker, external facts of life are alone explicable in terms of the ideals, the nobler ends and values to be achieved through the struggle from lower to higher. An entire philosophy of the reality and worth of life is implied in each of these attitudes.

Recent devotees of the point of view which regards the course of life from the upper rather than from the under side, have gone one step farther than many of the early partisans of idealism. For they insist that life shall not only be regarded in the light of spiritual ideals, but that each man shall have a practical way of realising such ideals in all the details of daily conduct, even in sickness and in sorrow. For it is one thing to possess a philosophy which interprets experience in

idealistic terms, and another to attain a higher attitude, and thereby show that one believes the philosophy true. Hence, conduct is the supreme test. So to live as to quicken others, because one really possesses the Spirit, is to give the best proof that there is a higher life. To have a resource which is practically fruitful in the moment of need, is to bear witness that there really is a higher power. Hence it is of more import what springs from the dynamic attitude than by what line of argument one supports the point of view.

As here used, the term 'higher' therefore refers to a very practical way of taking life in which emphasis is placed first of all on experience of a certain type. We all know what it is to have 'moods,' and we are well aware that consciousness of physical sensation sometimes masters us. On the other hand, we are equally well acquainted with quickening mental states which exalt the mind above pain, and triumph over our fears and temptations. But we are not able at will to place the mind in a triumphant mood. Ordinarily,

we are at the mercy of our shifting feelings and thoughts. 'Born to mastery,' as we sometimes say, we are for the most part mere observers of this ceaseless interplay. Life is a succession of contrasts, and, withal, of conflicts. If we could only be true to the best we know, if we could practise what we preach, there would be nought to ask. But we are constrained to confess with Emerson, 'Our faith comes in moments, our vice is habitual.' This is not our own arrangement. We are eager enough to realise our ideals. The fact that we go to church again and again to hear the same teachings; that we read over and over the same books, shows how deeply in earnest we are. But most of us are forced to confess that we do not know how to break free from this ceaseless round, and rise into the attitude of triumph.

It is a great point in our favour, however, when we are able to classify all our moods, impulses, and thoughts as lower or higher. In the one set of mental states we feel that we are not quite ourselves. We are swept

along by emotion, by fear or weakening doubt. We stoop to contemptible things, we are guilty of hatred, of bitterness and antagonism—in a word, we are selfish. In the other round of mental states we stand, as it were, erect. Love fills the heart; pity and sympathy prompt us. We are at peace with the world. We are free.

Now, a large part of our condemnation of friend and sinner alike is based on the fact that we judge others by their lower moods and tendencies, not by their higher. When we condemn ourselves it is not the larger, fuller self we condemn. We feel instinctively that the real self is the son of God. Never is it actually tempted. Never does it really doubt. Nor is it ever ill. Hence righteous judgment is insight into the higher order of things for which we really live. The higher life is the righteous life, and we begin to live it in earnest when we take into account first of all our real natures as sons of God.

To change the object of our judgments from surfaces to realities, from lower to

higher, is to begin to regard life from the point of view of progress, the ideal outcome of things, instead of from the standpoint of their birth-pains. Our misjudgments are chiefly due to the fact that we mistake the evolutionary process for the main thing, whereas it is only a means to an end. To call a man a sinner without qualification is to disgrace one's self. To treat a man as if he were merely a body is to insult him. A man is to be recognised for what he would be. No man is either by birth, by training, or as a result of environment, inherently evil. There may be wellnigh incurable criminals, who must be kept in strictest confinement; but it is not the soul that makes them so, and every man should be regarded as a soul.

To accept the point of view of evolution as here outlined, is to place the foremost emphasis on ideals, hence on methods for the realisation of ideals. If a man is tending toward the ideal, we must recognise that element in him, think of him chiefly in that

connection, call that element out. He who tries to regard all men from the standpoint of what they would be, finds that he has much to overcome. Hence the higher life begins at home.

All this involves the discovery of the resources of the inner world. It has been found by actual experience that to put oneself into the attitude of recognition of the higher order of things is to feel a sense of superior power. Simply to endeavour to regain the higher level, when one has sunk once more into the lower, is to be aware of an increasing consciousness of freedom, as if one were entering another world. Hence it is the belief of devotees of the higher life—defined in the practical sense now under consideration—that the soul is in actual dynamic relations with a superior order of things. They do not call this 'supernatural,' for they believe that all natural things exist for the sake of spiritual purposes. Ultimately speaking, it is all one order of existence. It is an error to sunder the natural from the spiritual.

It is the illusions of the lower level of consciousness that cut us off from resources of the higher order. In his rightful estate, man is a spiritual being. The whole meaning of his long evolution is his full development as a son of God. Hence, there is no condemnation of the lower, nor of the people who deem it the higher. The long evolution is necessary to bring man to consciousness.

To turn from the thought of the process to the thought of its goal is to draw the attention, with its accompanying power, away from the nervous wear and tear of life, and refresh one's soul. Ideals have power, and not alone because they elevate the thought, but because our conduct is affected by them. Man is primarily an active being. Hence, to reform him, you must give him a goal of action. To help him in the most practical way is to show him how he may put himself into an attitude of receptivity to higher power, and how to adjust himself to the regenerative influences of that quickening life.

This the devotees of the higher life claim

to do. They believe in the power of the spirit over the flesh, over the mind, and over all the influences that hold a man on the lower levels of life. Hence, freedom is their watchword. To become free, a man must know who he is. He must stand up in the power of his spiritual might, and enjoy the blessings that are prepared for the sons of God. Those blessings are all about us. We are immortal spirits now. We live in the eternal spiritual world. There is nothing to separate us from the power and love and wisdom of God. God is here. Guidance is for each and all. Our part is to be receptive, ready, alert, expectant. Everything tends toward this high spiritual end. It is for us to awaken and move with the current of things.

CHAPTER XXI

GOD IS LOVE

If one were asked to single out the word which above all others stands for the practical essence of the Christian faith, surely that word would be *love*. To love God with all one's mind and heart, to love one's neighbour as oneself—this is to realise in spirit and in conduct the gospel whose intent was not to destroy, but to fulfil. Likewise to declare that 'God is Love,' is to utter in one sentence the essence of Christian theism. To know that God is the Father, and that He above all is Love, is to apprehend the central principle of His relationship to us. Yet if no Christian word is more significant, none is more often used in a merely general sense. We believe, and we repeat, that God is Love. But how often do we consider in detail precisely what

this great utterance means? I do not merely reiterate the statement to-day; I ask you to consider with me some of its implications.

Much light is given us by the beloved disciple who made this fundamental statement. It is because of the Father's love that we are what we are, on account of that love that Jesus was sent, and love is said to be the test of all our life, as well as the basis of all true knowledge. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. . . . For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . . He that loveth not abideth in death. . . . Hereby know we love because he laid down his life for us. . . . Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.'

If God is Love, and it is because of love that God is made manifest as He is, if love is the principle of eternal life, and it is for that life that we exist, every event and all conditions should be understood in relation to love;

everything has been brought forth in love; everything is for love; love is the central life of all things; the universe is a cosmos of love; it is founded in and sustained by love. The divine purpose springs from the divine love; the fulness of the divine love is the reason for being of the universe; the universe of beings and things was needed that the divine love might be fulfilled, be made complete. The central principle of the universe is the life whose nature is to proceed forth, to become universal; hence to proceed from the one to the many, then unite the many in unity of purpose, oneness of life and spirit.

What does this signify? How can it be? First, let us recognise that we know not what love is, if we judge by what is ordinarily called by that name. It seems difficult to understand how God can be Love, even if we take our clue from the noblest affections in human life. For we think of love as a spirit or life, flowing, as it were, from some one, or uniting two or more beings; and we usually insist that love is a kind of mystery and is

not to be intellectually apprehended. There is a sense in which this belief is well founded. Love is rather to be felt than analytically known. At its best, human love is undoubtedly an experience known to two, and hence is for ever sacred. Love belongs to the world of appreciation rather than to the world of description; it is for the poets rather than for the men of science to tell us its reality. Love is of persons and for persons. As a reality, it is essentially incommunicable; each must know for himself, and each must know by being in love, not merely by doing deeds of love or meditating upon its gentle ways, surely not by 'falling in love.' But it is one of the tests of love that it proceeds from the individual to the universal. It may, indeed, be true that to possess the secret of love one must love devotedly. Love gives to persons and receives from persons in a way which love finds for itself. But that is no reason for ceasing to reflect upon the nature of love when, passing beyond the sacred relationship which only two may know, it shares its

blessings with people far and near, and gives the clue to man's total life.

Among other tests of the coming of genuine love, John assures us that we love not 'in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.' We no longer love the world as if it were a finality in itself, for the world of surfaces, and 'the lusts thereof passeth away': it is he who 'doeth the will of God' who possesses the abiding principle. He who is compassionate has the love of God abiding in him. If we have ceased to hate our fellow-men, and ceased to fear, we may know that love has come. But above all, so far as the human part is concerned, love is a state or spirit in which we abide, it is a principle of permanence, of eternal life. 'He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.' While, then, in the last analysis, 'we love because He first loved us,' God's love is not made perfect in us until we love one another, until we really love one another as a habit of life. Love is known both by the fact that we love one another, and by the fact that

God loves us. It is known by the new birth, for he who loves is literally born of God. Finally, it is known as a principle of life. If we love 'we know that we have passed out of death into life.' The issue is very sharply drawn, 'He that loveth not abideth in death.'

With the coming of the divine love, then, a certain life enters into us. Hereby 'we know that we are of the truth.' Our heart no longer condemns us. We abide in a certain spirit, we lead a certain mode of life. We not only possess, and are possessed by the power of love as a principle of life and the central guide in all conduct, but we know truth from error. Granted that we are able to meet the tests, we may have the 'boldness' of which John speaks. Since, then, love is the principle of knowledge in us, we may with entire confidence proceed to make explicit the implications of the basic statement, 'God is Love,' well knowing that there is no other ultimate reality.

Still following the clues which our human

life gives us, we may declare that, since 'God is Love,' love is in very truth, as Swedenborg says, 'the life of man.' If man springs from the divine love, exists for and because of that love, man is to be understood from love if he is to be understood at all. If love in man is the essence of man, the divine purpose in him, his life is not of himself alone but is of or from God, all powers and faculties within him become intelligible in the light of the divine-human love-relation. Man, we may say, is meant to manifest love, to live for love, to lead a life of love. His central ideal should then be to love God and His cosmos of love, to love man and the world of men. But to make love in this fundamental sense the principle of life and thought is constantly to consider how to apply in detail that which is in the most general sense the essence of life. Wherever we begin, the result is the same. It is love itself that prompts us either to reveal or to understand love. To know man better is to know God the more. To consider how God can be Love is to reflect upon the

essential nature of man. We possess the essence, we are that essence, hence it is possible to understand it. Unless love existed, knowledge would not be possible. Unless God already possessed us, unless we already possessed God, the essence which we would know, it would not be possible for us to proceed to the knowledge of it. Love is the implicit essence; knowledge the explicitness of that essence.

Now, in man we already know that as he wills so he acts. Where the heart is, there the thought is centred. What we continuously love, we as constantly seek. We pursue truth only because we love it. To love truth is to will that we possess it, to put ourselves in the attitude to win it. In general, to know what man loves, that is, what man wills, is to know his principle of action, to know what he is. You may aid him to carry out his purpose, you may bring forward arguments that support his will, but you cannot coerce him to love. To touch him more profoundly, you must love him more;

there is no other direct way to appeal to the will of man. But granted a change of heart, a change of thought naturally follows. Hence it is that all along the course of man's life everything that shows what man loves, what he wills, shows what he is. To know what his love is grounded in, is to know how love can be his very life. Now, obviously, his love springs from something; it is the love of something by something. We have entire right, then, to say that the self or the soul in man is primarily the basis of love; the soul is a being essentially constituted to love.

Carrying out the same line of reasoning with regard to God, we say that the fundamental statement, God is Love, impliesthat whatever else God is He is the *being* whose essence is Love. There must be the divine Being, since there is the divine Love. In knowing that God is Love, we already know somewhat concerning the divine Being. Since it is the very essence of that love to send itself forth into the universe, whatever we know of the universe is already knowledge of

the divine Love, hence of the divine Being. If God is Love, He is very much more. Hence we may consider what follows from the statement that He is Love.

Since the universe springs from love, and exists for love's sake, and since the divine love is eternal, the universe is a system, an order. Furthermore, its order is its beauty; the divine love is beautiful. The divine love, then, is not a vague spirit, proceeding forth at random. Love is for the sake of the highest good of all in the long-run; hence it is wise, involves purpose, adaptation. Love is good, the cosmos of love exists for the good, is founded in the divine goodness. Hence we may enlarge our statement by saying, God is Good, God is Reason, Wisdom. The divine love, then, springs from the divine mind, as well as from the divine heart; love is the motive and the end, wisdom is the means and the guiding principle. The divine order of the universe is founded on the divine reason, the orderly character of God. To know the whys and wherefores of the universe

is therefore to know the divine love, since that love is through and through wise; the order of the divine goodness and the divine love is likewise the order of the divine wisdom, the divine reason; the goodness of the divine love is the goodness of reason, the reason of the divine love is the divine beauty. Love, beauty, goodness and reason are all clues to the divine nature. Whatever attribute we select, if we make clear our ultimate meaning, we include all the others.

Since everything in the universe is ordered according to the wisdom of the divine love, it behooves us to study everything in its order, its place, degree and purpose. Hence we should not merely admire, adore, worship; we should also seek to understand, taking our clue from the central significance of the divine love.

Love, that is, contemplation, appreciation, comes first in order; then comes reflection upon the reason and use of that which we love. Love is the clue to all truth, but it is thought which brings out the details. The

life of reason in us is as surely divine as the life of love. Hence to love in the divine sense of the word is not merely to open wide the heart, but to open wide the mind. The divine love, I repeat, is not vague, but exists for purposes, is rational. And so love in the larger sense is for many ends; it is love of God, love of persons, love of truth, love of beauty, love of goodness; and the rational life of love is life for all of these.

That love has a way, a law, an order, is a familiar theme. But we are apt to stop with the mere belief. If love's way is the way of divine goodness, divine beauty, and the divine wisdom, we have three definite clues. We never possess love in its fulness until we make explicit its system, its law, and purpose. First, however, we should seek the rhythms of love's way, its tendencies and leadings, its immanent life. Love's way is indeed mysterious at first; for it brings tribulation and pain, it tests our faith, and often we are sore afraid. But we must follow its leadings if we would know its law; 'not my way but Thine,'

is always the prayer of the one who would really win love. But since love springs from reason, love's course is consistent, and all its leadings make for the same high end. In other words, love always *knows* the way. Love is wisdom; it is not blind.

Love grants freedom to all, freedom to wander and to disobey; hence the vicissitudes of human experience. Man often interferes with the divine love, rebels, hence man has many struggles. But once more it is love's way which shows us how to return from our selfish wanderings. The divine love wills to be complete in us, is made perfect through these our wanderings, forgives until seventy times seven, forgives all save that which cannot be forgiven. For with all love's power one thing is demanded of us, namely, that we become receptive.

Love stirs within us in manifold ways, and usually we misunderstand. But all love is good, and is meant for our good; it is incumbent upon us to know love's ends, orders, and degrees, that we may see the good of every-

thing in its place. The divine love prompts us, for example, to love our fellows. This was meant to be disinterested, but is often turned into selfish affection. Again, the power of reason in us was meant to reveal the meaning, the wisdom of divine love. But we forget the intimate connection between love and wisdom, and make the intellect an end in itself. Hence has come about the strange belief that God cannot be known through reason. But I have tried to show that that is the only way He can be known, provided we already possess His love in our heart.

'God is greater than our heart,' says John. But he also assures us that if our heart condemn us not, we indeed apprehend God, and God is Love. 'No man hath seen God at any time.' Yet if we love one another we possess that which we cannot see, we are sure that 'God abideth in us,' that His 'love is perfected in us.' 'Hereby we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His spirit.' Thus every time we meet an obstacle when we seek God by

another channel, we succeed by following the clues of love. To possess the spirit which He has given us is to have the clue to all reality, all truth. God is indeed Love, because He is all these other qualities besides, and we know Him in very truth when we worship Him not only in spirit, but in truth, as beauty, goodness, and reason.

CHAPTER XXII

THE POWER OF TRUTH

'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

Let us once again consider the truth which shall confer freedom upon all mankind, once again let us remind ourselves that man shall find it by first seeking the righteousness and the Kingdom of God. It is long ere we see that, having found the Kingdom, all things shall be made intelligible in relation to this primal truth; it is long ere we see the practical power of this great truth. In reality the great discovery involves, first, an experience, then a mode of life, and finally a principle of thought. Hence there are a number of aspects to the truth which Jesus enunciated.

1. First, Jesus called upon all men to 'repent,' for the Kingdom was at hand.

Now, the word 'repent' in the Greek means a second thought, to change one's mind on reflection. Men had grown oblivious of God. They were still sons of God. The love of God is perfect, and no soul is ever really separated from the Father. Even when the Father is denied, He is intimately present; for He watcheth even over the sparrows. Therefore the separation from the Father was not on the Godward side; it was in the consciousness of man, who had forgotten. Jesus accordingly calls on man to reflect, to consider his relationship to God. For the Kingdom 'is within you.' It is 'at hand.' It is not an external dominion, coming in gorgeous splendour, but is invisible. It cometh not with observation. It dwells in the heart. Every man who shall turn within in child-like trust will find that everything has been provided.

In other words, the Kingdom of God is, as we would say, the system of the universe with which every man is intimately related. The universe is a divine order, it exists for a

supremely wise purpose. 'All things work together,' and the Father 'worketh hitherto' and worketh unceasingly, now and henceforth. There is nothing that exists outside of the divine order, nothing without divine guidance. The system, the watchfulness is unbroken, whether man knows it or not. When man becomes so absorbed in worldly pursuits that he forgets the divine care, a prophet is needed to call him to repentance—that is, to consciousness. Jesus came as the prophet of prophets, the one who above all others has made clear the law by living the life of the Spirit.

2. The second great principle in the teaching of Jesus is made clear when He says: 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' He was willing to follow this principle to the bitter end, even to undergo the sufferings of the cross. Thus His conduct taught even more than His precepts. By fidelity of conduct He brought the powers of His three marvellous years of ministry to a centre, a supreme height, from whence His spirit went forth,

and has been going forth into the world ever since.

The saying of Jesus, 'Not my will, but Thine,' implies that Jesus believed in the universality of the divine will as the centralising power; the divine will makes possible the unity of the world system. Man's mistake is in supposing that he is independent of this will, that he can be something of and by himself. This is in a sense 'the fall of man.' Here is the basis of man's sin and misery. The great truth which sets him free is the discovery of the facts of his spiritual life as a son of God. To reflect, to see that he is neught by himself, but is dependent, limited, organic, is to discover the true way of salvation, namely, to adjust himself to the Father's will. That will is expressed many-sidedly. As a many-sided being, man must become every whit whole, every whit beautiful, both in the æsthetic and in the moral sense. When he shall become beautiful, he shall see and know and feel the wholeness of the divine order, shall be free from the trammels of ignorance.

This is expounding the words of Jesus in rather modern words, tinctured by Greek thought; but it seems justifiable to interpret modern Christian life in this more æsthetic sense.

He who would obey the Father's will must then adjust himself to that will in the universal sense. The divine will does not apply to the subjective life alone. Nor is it alone an affair of the external life. It is at once inner and outer, individual and social. It is a law of the total spiritual order. Everything is related to everything else through the divine will—God regarded as immanent in action. Man, when living by the spirit, is adjusted to the divine will. Jesus also assures us that 'he that loseth his life shall find it.' To obey the divine will is not then to sacrifice individuality. By this obedience, this consecration, man at last learns how to be a true individual, *in relation*, not in isolation. Sin, selfishness, is exclusiveness. To be free from sin, man must pass beyond the bounds of his ego, and view himself in the light of

his social relationships, his organic place in the divine order. Then he shall truly find himself. Then shall he be truly free, for freedom is enjoyed in certain relations; it is not existent by itself, 'in the air,' apart from the moral order.

3. Jesus did not, then, limit the acceptance of the Kingdom to the comparatively small department of man's life sometimes termed 'man's sinful nature.' He came to reveal the Kingdom as a universal dominion of righteousness. He showed that He meant what He said by healing the people of their diseases and casting out their evil spirits. Its application even to the body of man was convincing evidence that the law of the Kingdom was as truly objective as subjective, as truly physical as what some Christians have exclusively called 'spiritual.' To deny the external, to deem it 'low' or 'evil' is therefore to fail to this extent to be a Christian. The Christianity of Jesus applied to the whole man; Jesus made no exception. If customs and terms have changed since His

time, if to state His teaching in philosophical terms is in a sense to inculcate what He did not as explicitly teach, still no exposition of His wisdom seems to be complete which fails to bring out this many-sided universality as a legitimate inference from the principles He laid down.

Jesus came, then, to bring certain great truths 'to light.' He came to assure men that they are immortal souls in the universal Kingdom of the Father; not mere creatures of physical circumstance. He dwelt in the spiritual Kingdom, as an eternal, not alone as a temporal order. Hence He regarded all things in the light of this higher relationship. One might say that He of all men most clearly saw things in this visible world as they really are. His example shows that it is not enough merely to know the law; one must be, one must accomplish. There is no abstract process by which one may solve the riddles of life. Man must first obey the law before he shall fully know it. Being, in the fuller sense, is a clue to knowing. To live, to ex-

press, is to prove that we have attained. To serve is more fully to attain. To attain is more fully to know.

Having been born in ignorance of these great truths, and being inclined to forget them even when they have been partly revealed, man, of course, needed to be taught 'the way, the truth, and the life.'

The coming of Jesus seems to have been in 'the fitness of time,' when a few men were sufficiently enlightened to receive the blessed message and report it to the world. Jesus came to recall mankind to the fact that the true Father is the God of love. God needs no sacrifice; He demands no sacrifice; He is not angry. He is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

There are many paths pursued by those who try to make headway in the world. Some men begin by fighting. Others pursue error 'to earth.' Physical methods are sometimes employed. Again, argument is called into play. But to know the truth you need neither struggle nor refute. The power of truth

is calm, persuasive. To see it is to become reposeful, contented. Anxiety ceases, and a spirit of satisfaction takes its place. It is no longer necessary to create a furor, to assert, declare, affirm, as if one's beliefs could only be maintained by constant dogmatic repetition. The truth is the truth, and it supports itself. Hence the value of all methods of gaining knowledge by pushing through to the end. Knowledge is power. If you know the facts and comprehend the law you are secure. To know the truth about people and things is sometimes unpleasant. But in general it is well to know just how things are, then abide by the truth.

In instances of seeming misfortune, whenever we have forebodings or fear that great troubles are about to come upon us, if we can but learn the folly of all our anxieties, all is well. In many a case of illness, sorrow, and sin, if man could but see the truth of his real life, the truth would be the cure. There are many things which we cannot yet know, much that is hidden from us. But in general

we know all that is essential. Hence the power of Jesus' Gospel. To see that the Kingdom of God is in truth an omnipresent system of goodness and love; to learn that we are sons of God; and that the eternal life of the spiritual world is ours now—this, if we really see its significance, is the great truth which sets all men free.

Otherwise stated, the compensation for sin is the great truth made known by Jesus, namely, that man may so live as to be without sin. Had man not been born in ignorance and granted the freedom of personal experiment, he would have lacked the contrast, the relational experience by which to understand the divine order, the righteous life.

Man is not corrupt, he is not depraved, he would not willingly do wrong if he knew the full truth about life. It is half-truths that make mischief in the world. A half-truth is often more dangerous than a statement that is largely false. To know the complete Christian truth is to know that there is full atonement for sin. The Father forgives until

seventy thousand times seven, and guides the soul to liberty. Every one of our nine, or ninety, or nine hundred sins must be atoned for by deeds of righteousness. Jesus shows us how to live so as to make this complete atonement; He does not live for us.

To atone is to do that which is right, in contrast to a deed that was wrong. Where I once hated I ought now to love. It was wrong to hate because it was contrary to the divine order, contrary to the law of spiritual growth, contrary to the spirit of God. One person may indeed suffer for another, that the other may see the way, although the positive statement is that it is a deed of love, not a deed of sacrifice. One may even bear another's burden for a time. But that does not free the person from responsibility.

A sudden atonement which should apply to all time was only conceivable when the law of evolution was not known. That doctrine belongs with the old idea of creation out of nothing. The philosophy of evolution in every way enlarges the mission of Jesus.

Jesus came in fulfilment of ages of evolution. His life would have little significance for us unless it revealed possibilities that are open to us. It is the law of evolution which makes those possibilities clear.

As here considered, the consciousness attained by Jesus is typical of the universal ideal set before the human mind. If you would know reality you must be fully adjusted to it. If you would know the Christ you must endeavour to live as Jesus lived. If you would truly know the Father you must truly serve Him. There is no theory, no vicarious suffering which can bring to you a reality equivalent to the actual life. Hence it is necessary for each man to come to consciousness, take home the great truths which make for freedom, and begin to do for himself that which no man can do for him.

If you would possess the realities of the great truth which Jesus revealed, begin by putting the factors of your life in their proper order. You have been looking for

salvation to come from without. You have sought easy by-paths and ways of escape. You have expected to attain freedom without conquering self. You have depended upon other people, and relied on authority. Above all you have lacked the courage of conviction, you have not dared to make the full venture demanded of those who live by faith. But now you see that everything depends upon yourself. There is no reason to discredit the universe, there is nothing one would ask for that has not been done. All the guidance and power your soul cries out for are here. But the change must come from within, you must learn of experience its law and meaning, its divine environment, its God-inspired tendency. The simplest, humblest experience is as direct a road as any other, one time or place is as good as another; the essential is to begin to think, to observe the workings of the Spirit. For it is precisely through the Spirit's relationship to you that the significance of the great truth is to be seen. It is your judgment, your interpretation, your

insight, your love that avails; not what some one else has said. What others have said or done means more or less precisely according to what you are and what you see; no one can see and know for you. It is you and the Father who must become one. It is the individual experience that is both the reality and the test. The thought is secondary, it is the life to which the thought refers that is fundamentally real. The creed is secondary, it is the conduct which follows that is significant. Have the faith, make the venture, pay the price, and you will win the gift. Do not expect to attain it without. But if you have learned this simple lesson the world is yours.

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